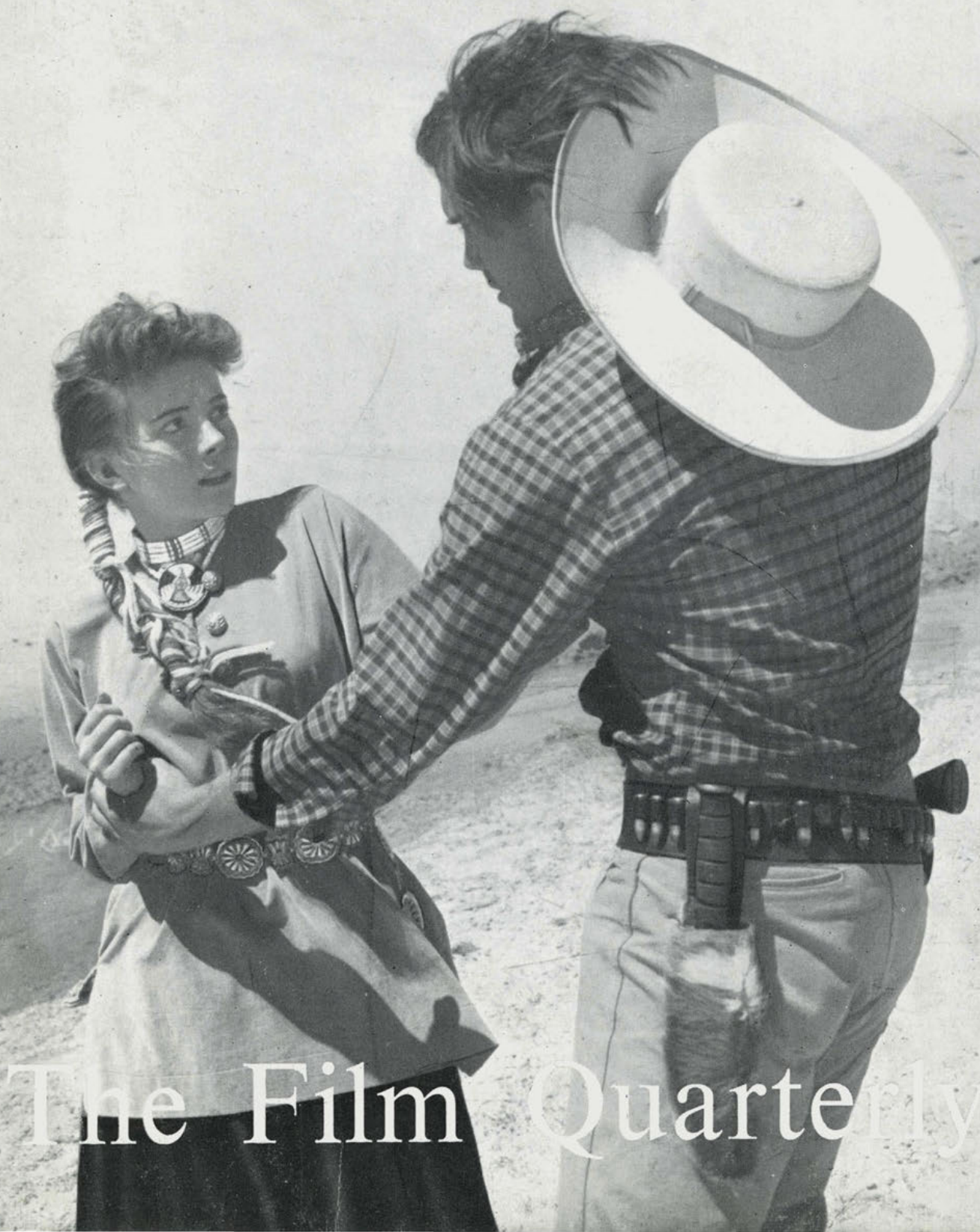


SUMMER 1956

Three Shillings and Sixpence

SIGHT AND SOUND



The Film Quarterly



STATION 307

A new chapter in the story of the search for oil has recently been written. Commandant Cousteau, the famous French underwater explorer, was commissioned to investigate the geology of the sea-bed of the Persian Gulf.

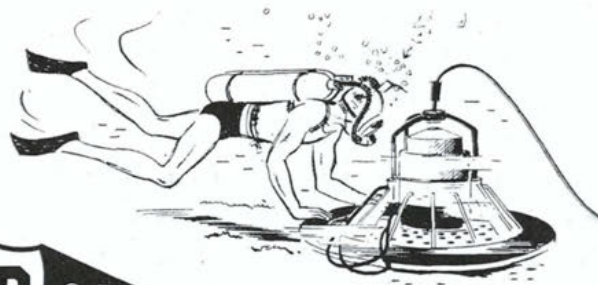
The survey ship *Calypso*, equipped with many special devices, including a submarine gravimeter, took a team of scientists and aqua-lung divers to the area. The film shows the operations on the sea-bed, with the divers protected by a cage against sharks.

The film was made by Commandant Cousteau, who also gives the commentary, and runs for 15 minutes.

distribution in many countries. They are available to any recognised organisation and include those of special interest to universities, schools, business and training colleges and scientific societies. Each is available in both 35 mm. and 16 mm. sizes. One of these films is given a brief description here, and details of the others in the series can be obtained from the Petroleum Films Bureau from whom all 16 mm. films and selected 35 mm. films may be obtained free of charge.

A SERIES OF FILMS, sponsored by The British Petroleum Company, has been made to illustrate those chapters in the story of the oil industry which are of more popular interest.

Each of these films has been made to entertain as well as instruct and they are already enjoying a wide



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SIGHT AND SOUND

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ON THE COVER: Natalie Wood and Jeffrey Hunter in a scene
from John Ford's new Western, *The Searchers*.

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THE FRONT PAGE

TEN years ago the rights in Marcel Carné's *Le Jour se Lève* were sold for an American remake, copies of the original were reported as destroyed, and the virtual extinction of a masterpiece was mournfully proclaimed. Ironically, the reappearance of *Le Jour se Lève* some weeks ago at a London cinema coincided with the news that other films, notably *Citizen Kane* and *Pygmalion*, were currently in danger. Anyone concerned about their fate may be slightly cheered by this evidence that reports of the death of a film are sometimes greatly exaggerated.

The fact remains, though, that for one reason or another companies are becoming increasingly ready to allow their old pictures to vanish from the cinemas. Remakes, notably musical remakes, are in fashion: *The Birds and the Bees* borrows its story from *The Lady Eve*; *Nothing Sacred* has already undergone conversion into a vehicle for Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis; *Pygmalion* itself will reappear in the form of a screen version of *My Fair Lady*, the stage musical based on Shaw's play. The forty-five minute TV remake, at present a speciality of one American company, comes into rather a different category. There seems no valid reason why the company should want permanently to suppress the originals of *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *Fourteen Hours* or *Laura* in favour of potted remakes whose long-term commercial value must be considerably less substantial. Finally, the sale of films to television is offering Hollywood a new and attractive market.

The point at issue is, simply, that a film has a much shorter life as an active commercial proposition than as a work of art. The critic and the interested cinemagoer are concerned with asserting their right to continue to see films. The film company's own allegiance is always and inevitably to the new product. An original version cannot be allowed to compete commercially with a remake; and even if a remake is not in question, there remains the risk that the continued showing of a "classic" may lure audiences away from films that have yet to pay their way at the box-office. Both points of view are reasonable. They are irreconcilable because they are founded in attitudes fundamentally opposed. And it should be noted that it is not only the commercial companies who may choose to keep their films under lock and key. Chaplin has proved a notably jealous guardian of his property, and anyone anxious to see again *The Great Dictator* or *Monsieur Verdoux* will find that "suppression", of a kind, most effectively operates.

Deliberate destruction, or the total suppression of a film in the interests of a remake (cf. Thorold Dickinson's *Gaslight*, which disappeared to make way for the American *Murder in Thornton Square*) are fairly rare occurrences. Although the National Film Archive in London has no legal right to require film copies for preservation, it can effectively rely on the co-operation of most companies, who lose nothing by ensuring that their films remain in safe keeping. Many

countries have archive collections, and the safety of screen masterpieces is reasonably assured. The main risk, perhaps, is that to date copyright in a film has not been thoroughly defined, and that when the various rights in it revert to their original holders (to, for instance, the author of the original play or novel), it may seem pointless to retain the film. The Copyright Bill at present before Parliament, however, recognises the film's independent existence as a work of art and clarifies its copyright status.

Preservation in an archive, insurance against actual destruction, gives the average filmgoer about as much satisfaction as the knowledge that a single copy of a book is safely held in a national library. A film that can no longer be seen is for all practical purposes defunct. Paradoxically, though, the withdrawal of films from the cinemas is likely to mean that their active life may be substantially prolonged. Television, the insatiable monster, needs more material than it can conceivably provide from its own resources. In America, the inevitable has already happened: almost every major company has come to terms with the new medium, releasing huge stocks of films to television. RKO, for instance, has disposed of its entire backlog of pre-1948 films; Warners has sold its early films outright; Columbia has leased about 200 pictures; M-G-M is reported to be releasing a total of 900 films.

At first sight, this may scarcely seem a very encouraging development. "Hundreds of films", Miss Dilys Powell recently commented, "are sold to people who will have the right to issue them in fragments and in a medium for which they were not intended". Although films are often reissued to the cinemas in a somewhat fragmentary form, there is a general suspicion that the new owners may show less respect for the property they have acquired than the film companies. This remains to be seen. The range of material shown on TV is sufficiently indicated by a list recently published in the American magazine *Films in Review*, and including such titles as *Bicycle Thieves*, *The Blue Angel*, *Congress Dances*, *Stagecoach*, *The Southerner* and *A Walk in the Sun*. "Almost every major British film", it is claimed, "has either played on TV or is available for telecasting". (*The 39 Steps*, *Brief Encounter*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and *Genevieve* are among titles listed).

Certainly this progress will not be checked. The ideal solution, from the point of view of anyone who likes to see films in their entirety and on the kind of screen for which they were designed, would be some agreement for peaceful co-existence between TV and the cinemas. A novel is not taken out of circulation when a screen version is presented; it is part of the basic economics of the film industry that a picture can be withdrawn or cut to pieces whenever it seems commercially convenient. Ultimately, though, destruction can be in no-one's interest, least of all in that of the filmmakers themselves, who have as yet been strangely apathetic in defending their own products. Co-operation between film and television companies and the film archivists would most effectively insure that any casualties resulting from the new developments are kept to a minimum.

Opposite: Audrey Hepburn, who plays Natasha in the screen version of *War and Peace*, with director King Vidor. Photograph by Robert Hawkins.

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two or three stars.

****AFRICAN LION, THE** (Disney) Probably the best of the *True Life Adventure* series. Fascinating close-ups of all kinds of animals: splendid lions, hippopotamuses under water and a devastating cheetah. *Reviewed.* (Director: James Algar. Print by Technicolor.)

ANYTHING GOES (Paramount) Machine-made version of the 1936 musical, with standardised plotting, pre-fabricated dance routines, vintage Cole Porter tunes and stylishly sophisticated playing from Renée Jeanmaire. (Bing Crosby, Donald O'Connor, Mitzi Gaynor; director, Robert Lewis. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

BIRDS AND THE BEES, THE (Paramount) Ruthlessly unsubtle remake of *The Lady Eve*, with songs, dances and TV comedian George Gobel involved in some punishing slapstick. (Mitzi Gaynor, David Niven; director, Norman Taurog. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

***CAROUSEL** (Fox) Massive and sonorous version of the stage musical. Acrobatic choreography and some acceptable sentiment, but treatment generally rather portentous and stagey. (Gordon MacRae, Shirley Jones, Cameron Mitchell; director, Henry King. CinemaScope 55, Eastman Colour.)

***CINERAMA HOLIDAY** (Cinerama Productions) Nothing here is as impressive as the celebrated aeroplane tour in *This is Cinerama*, but the extended large-screen travelogue has its striking and effective episodes. (Directors, Robert Bendick, Philippe de Lacey. Technicolor.)

****DEATH OF A CYCLIST** (Leontine) Juan Antonio Bardem's intellectual melodrama, in which the clandestine affair between a married woman and a university lecturer is threatened with exposure after they are involved in a car accident. A clever, coldly mathematical film with some sharp social observation. *Reviewed.* (Lucia Bose, Alberto Closas.)

***EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY** (Paramount) De Sica's sketch film about Naples, *Oro di Napoli*, dubbed and drastically abridged. With three of the six episodes missing, and cuts interrupting the surviving stories, the film is reduced to a series of very fragmentary anecdotes. (Silvana Mangano, Sophia Loren, Toto.)

EXTRA DAY, THE (British Lion) An assistant director, recalling a group of extras for an additional day's filming, becomes involved in their private lives. Standardised treatment of sentimental-comic episodes. (Richard Basehart, Simone Simon, George Baker; director, William Fairchild. Eastman Colour.)

***FORBIDDEN PLANET** (M-G-M) M-G-M's first essay in science fiction. An enjoyably full-blown space fantasy, with engaging gadgets, a charming robot, an electronic sound track and an extravagant Freudian monster. (Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis, Leslie Nielsen; director, Fred McLeod Wilcox. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

FOREVER DARLING (M-G-M) The matrimonial troubles of the *I Love Lucy* team solved by a guardian angel in the person of James Mason. Embarrassingly whimsical. (Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz; director, Alexander Hall. Eastman Colour.)

GABY (M-G-M) Comparatively dry-eyed remake of *Waterloo Bridge*, clumsily directed and scripted but with momentary charm in the love scenes. Bizarre wartime London backgrounds. (Leslie Caron, John Kerr; director, Curtis Bernhardt. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

GRAND JEU, LE (Gala) Remake of Feyder's 1933 melodrama and not an improvement on it. Life in the Foreign Legion; tortured romance; Arletty as a card-reader; dual performance by Lollobrigida. (Jean-Claude Pascal; director, Robert Siodmak. Eastman Colour.)

HILDA CRANE (Fox) Jean Simmons essays a Bette Davis type of part in this novelette about a woman with a past who returns to her home town to live it down. Some elementary emotional stress; spirited over-acting from Evelyn Varden as a domineering mother. (Guy Madison, Jean Pierre Aumont; director, Philip Dunne. CinemaScope. Print by Technicolor.)

I'LL CRY TOMORROW (M-G-M) The case-history of an alcoholic, based on Lillian Roth's book about her own experiences. Depths of alcoholic misery are ruthlessly and tastelessly plumbed. (Susan Hayward, Richard Conte, Jo Van Fleet; director, Daniel Mann.)

IT'S GREAT TO BE YOUNG (A.B.-Pathé) Boisterous comedy about the efforts of a school orchestra to reinstate a popular master. Simple and sentimental, with some amusing moments. (John Mills, Cecil Parker; director, Cyril Frankel. Print by Technicolor.)

LONG ARM, THE (JARFID) Scotland Yard detective Jack Hawkins chasing a master safe-breaker and some improbable clues while pacifying his neglected wife and small son. Ealing's swan song, a respectable thriller in the *Blue Lamp* style. (John Stratton, Dorothy Allison; director, Charles Friend.)

***MAN IN THE GREY FLANNEL SUIT, THE** (Fox) Very long, fairly solemn inquiry into the financial, professional and domestic worries of a New Yorker in the \$10,000 a year income bracket. A flat piece of film-making, but a revealing sociological document. (Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Fredric March; director, Nunnally Johnson. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, THE** (Paramount) Disappointingly pedestrian Hitchcock remake which smartens and expands the original but loses in tension and charm. One or two shrewd master touches, varied backgrounds, singing by Doris Day. *Reviewed.* (James Stewart, Bernard Miles. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

MIRACLE IN THE RAIN (Warners) Plain typist falls in love with soldier who is killed in action but later returns to her in a vision. Authentic New York locations, authentic sadness, unconvincing miracle. (Jane Wyman, Van Johnson; director, Rudolph Maté.)

MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER (British Lion) Anna Neagle as a widow whose daughter gets mixed up with a reckless young man and takes to jive. A genteel *Rebel Without a Cause*, with some ambiguity and many tears. (Sylvia Syms, Kenneth Haigh; director, Herbert Wilcox.)

NANA (Gala) Sumptuously mounted but mechanical and repetitive version of Zola's novel. Some attractive interior design, well upholstered performance by Martine Carol, slight censor cuts. (Charles Boyer, Walter Chiari; director, Christian-Jaque. Eastman Colour.)

***PACIFIC DESTINY** (British Lion) Exploits of Colonial Service cadet and his wife among the South Sea islanders, taken from Sir Arthur Grimble's *A Pattern of Islands*. Authentic tropics, amiable islanders, honest intentions. *Reviewed.* (Denholm Elliott, Susan Stephen; director, Wolf Rilla. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

PORT AFRIQUE (Columbia) Crippled ex-army flier tracks down his wife's murderer and finds consolation with a Spanish singer. Mawkish melodrama; Moroccan backgrounds. (Phil Carey, Pier Angeli; director, Rudolph Maté. Technicolor.)

RACK, THE (M-G-M) Court-martial of American officer accused of collaboration in Korean prison camp. Self-consciously hard-hitting, sentimental and inconclusive, but at least a try at something new. (Paul Newman, Walter Pidgeon; director, Arnold Laven.)

***REACH FOR THE SKY** (JARFID) Paul Brickhill's biography of Douglas Bader adapted as a vehicle for Kenneth More. Some impressive scenes, but over-smooth and detached treatment fails to bring the character finally to life. (Muriel Pavlow; director, Lewis Gilbert.)

SERENADE (Warners) Enfeebled version of a James M. Cain novel: vineyard worker becomes opera star, is dragged down by bad woman, recovers with help of Mexican girl. Lackadaisical direction, vociferous operatic excerpts. (Mario Lanza, Joan Fontaine, Sarita Montiel; director, Anthony Mann. WarnerColor.)

***STORM CENTRE** (Columbia) Political witch-hunt in a New England town when its librarian upholds her right to keep a book called *The Communist Dream* on the shelves. Over-written, under-directed tract which occasionally rises to the level of its subject. *Reviewed.* (Bette Davis, Brian Keith, Kim Hunter; director, Daniel Taradash.)

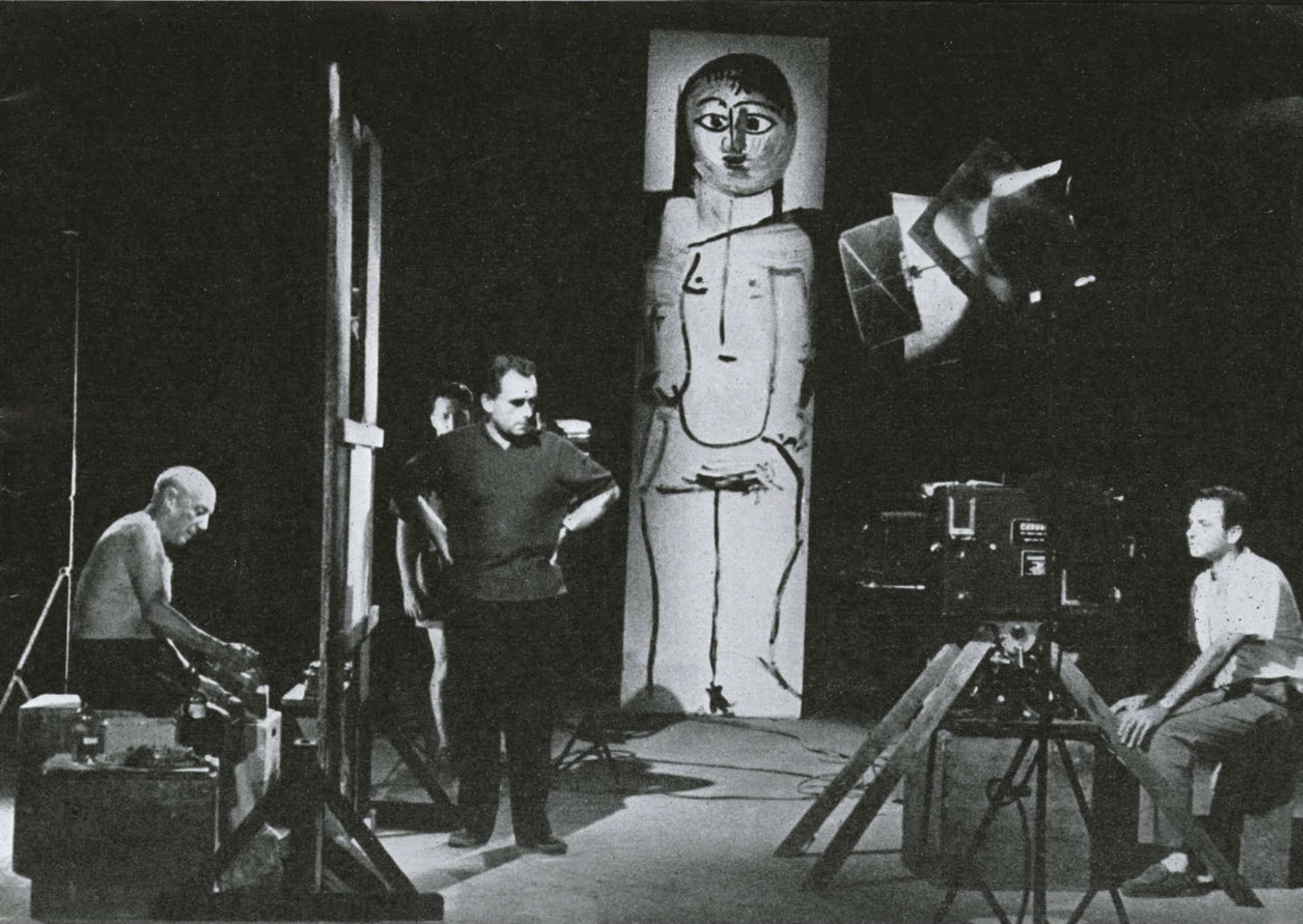
****TEN DAYS TO DIE** (Films de France) G. W. Pabst's hysterical, gripping and slightly suspect interpretation of Hitler's last days in the Berlin bunker. (Albin Skoda, Oskar Werner, Lotte Tobisch.)

***THERESE RAQUIN** (Astarte) Zola's story emasculated and dragged up to date. The fires of passion and guilt have been banked down to fit a stock pair of *Carné amants traqués* up against *Le Destin*. *Reviewed.* (Simone Signoret, Raf Vallone.)

***TRAPEZE** (United Artists) The promise of the Hecht-Lancaster-Reed combination not quite fulfilled, but still an efficient circus film with plenty of hoop-la, exciting trapeze work and moments of style. *Reviewed.* (Burt Lancaster, Gina Lollobrigida, Tony Curtis. CinemaScope, De Luxe Color.)

VIVA LAS VEGAS! (M-G-M) Grandiose but banal musical, with plot that mixes gambling and fantasy. Ballets include *Frankie and Johnny* (again) and modern dress *Sleeping Beauty*. Guest artists include Lena Horne. (Dan Dailey, Cyd Charisse; director, Roy Rowland. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***WEDDING BREAKFAST** (M-G-M) A Bronx-Irish couple divided by the problem of whether to spend their life's savings on daughter's wedding. Based on TV play by the author of *Marty*; stagey but enjoyable. (Bette Davis, Ernest Borgnine, Debbie Reynolds; director, Richard Brooks.)



"Le Mystère Picasso": Clouzot's new film, a prize-winner at the recent Cannes Festival, is a detailed study of the painter in action.

In the Picture

Cork en F  te

JOHN GILLETT writes: The introduction of yet another film festival into Europe's crowded calendar is no light undertaking, but the social and popular success of the Cork Festival held in May during the Tostal celebrations fully justified the efforts of Mr. Dermot Breen, the organiser, and the Cork Tostal Council. The foreign stars and delegates are unlikely to forget the welcome they received from the people of Cork, rapturous almost to the point of hysteria. On occasions it was necessary practically to fight one's way into the Festival cinema, while several visitors had to be torn from the avid autograph hunters by a posse of policemen. This lively mood was sustained throughout the week by friendly Irish hospitality, beautiful weather, and the arrival of 30 cases of champagne, a gift from Moira Lister's husband, the Vicomte d'Orthez. A more relaxed note was introduced by the Rank Organisation, who arranged a pleasant river trip to the town of Cobh, a journey full of sudden surprises and unexpected meet-

ings, all of which were discussed in a variety of foreign tongues by a motley crew of Rank contract stars, press representatives and a group of Irish dancers.

Inside the cinema, unfortunately, a certain disillusionment set in. Ford's new Western, *The Searchers*, despite some characteristically personal scenes and beautiful VistaVision landscapes, seemed over-long and repetitive and was marred by some indifferent playing. Many of the other features appeared as average commercial copies of familiar styles, some informed with authentic and often interesting national characteristics, but fundamentally second-class matter. A violently melodramatic Egyptian film, *Dark Waters*, closely echoed *On the Waterfront*; Maurice Cloche's *Un Missionnaire* was a stilted religious tract; Alex Joff  s *Les Assassins du Dimanche* (shot in Cinepanoramic) endeavoured to beat Clouzot at his own game and succeeded in being intermittently exciting; while the powerfully acted Japanese entry, *I am on Trial*, combined a *Rashomon*-like story with existentialist overtones and provided some intriguing glimpses of Japanese legal procedure. Of the two Italian entries, the pseudo neo-realist *Il Ferroviere* of Pietro Germi had some effective scenes and an appealing child star and was infinitely superior to *La Donna del Fiume*, a crudely erotic Moravia story reminiscent of *Bitter Rice*. In the documentary section only *The Shepherd*, a gently poetic Canadian short, *The Face of Lincoln*, which showed the work of Merrell Gage, an American sculptor, *The Naked Sea*, a brilliantly shot description of tuna fishing, and the Shell film *The Rival World* revealed real creative flair.

Not the least interesting events were three morning lectures. Thorold Dickinson gave an intellectually stimulating address on the pressures and influences surrounding modern film-making; Father Burke spoke of the attitude of the Catholic Church to the cinema; and John Huntley's talk on music and the sound track

introduced a delighted audience to the lively world of Norman McLaren.

An initial undertaking of this kind inevitably has its limitations, and it takes some time for a festival to discover a character of its own. The organisers would be well advised to employ a more selective method in their future programme planning, for many of this year's entries (notably the shorts) fell well below an acceptable international standard. The persistent bogey of the commercial wide-screen also made itself felt, and it was gratifying to note how a friendly public protest by Thorold Dickinson encouraged members of the Irish Press to take the matter up officially. Consequently, with the co-operation of the Festival cinema, *Together* was shown on the last day in an acceptable aspect ratio, thus escaping the drastic decapitation suffered by the sub-titled films.

Speaking for the Festival's panel of adjudicators, Paul Rotha announced the Festival Awards during a final gala performance:— Best Feature: *Les Assassins du Dimanche*; Best Documentary: *The Rival World*; Best Director: Pietro Germi (*Il Ferroviere*); Best Actress: Sachiko Hidari (*I Am on Trial*); Best Actor: Yves Massard (*Un Missionnaire*). Certificates of Merit were presented to *The Shepherd*, *La Donna del Fiume* and *I'll Cry Tomorrow*.

German Notes

WERNER ZURBUCH writes: The uncertainty of German producers in the selection of subjects has never been more pronounced than at present, and numerous remakes feature among the 120 German and Austrian films recently made or announced. The most famous titles are *Der Letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*; Murnau, 1924), which in the hands of Harald Braun has become a rather boring story of a waiter, convincingly played, however, by Hans Albers; *Congress Dances* (Erik Charell, 1931), now unimaginatively remade, in CinemaScope, by Franz Antel; and *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (*Three from the Filling Station*; Wilhelm Thiele, 1930), directed by Hans Wolf under the supervision of Willi Forst, shot in rather variable colour, and decidedly inferior in playing to the original version.

Another noticeable trend in German production is the emphasis on films designed to strengthen the national conscience. This was what Lang also attempted in 1925 with his *Nibelungen*, and Siegfried Kracauer was referring to Lang's intention when he wrote: "According to him *Nibelungen* had quite another mission; to offer something strictly national, something that, like the Lay of the *Nibelungs* itself, might be considered a true manifestation of the German mind". Biographical studies of famous Germans—*Sauerbruch*, *Canaris* and *Thomas Muntzer* (filmed at the DEFA studios in Berlin)—are currently in fashion. Films about the German resistance, such as *Der 20 Juli* and *Es geschah am 20 Juli* (scripted by Gustav Machaty and directed by G. W. Pabst), do not seem, however, greatly to interest the German public.

Helmut Kautner is now directing his last German film before going to Hollywood—*Der Hauptmann von Kopenick*, from Carl Zuckmayer's satirical study of German militarism. Kautner recently made *Himmel ohne Sterne*, whose purpose, as he himself put it, was "to demonstrate the existing contrasts and to stress what people on both sides of the Iron Curtain have in common". Kautner, I believe, follows Stanislavsky's theories in directing his actors; and Eva Kotthaus, who plays the leading part in *Himmel*

ohne Sterne, came from the Maxim-Gorky Theatre in Berlin, where Stanislavsky's methods are still practised.

In the Eastern Zone, Konrad Wolf broke new ground with his comedy *Einmal ist Keinmal* (*One Time is No Time*, 1954), and has recently finished *Genesung* (*Recovering*), the story of a doctor who practises without having a medical degree. Wolf, who studied at the State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow, where he was taught by Alexandrov, seems one of the most promising German directors.

Among recent productions, the most impressive is *Alibi*, made by the team responsible for *Canaris*—director Alfred Weidenmann, writer Herbert Reinecker and leading player O. E. Hasse. This is the story of a reporter's efforts to secure the release of an innocent man from jail. The film confirms its director's position as one of the more interesting German film-makers. Paul May (director of *08/15*) has not however added to his reputation with his latest film, *Weil Du Arm bist, must du fruher sterben* (*Because You're Poor, You Must Die Soon*). This is an unsatisfactory conglomeration of different styles, mixing expressionism, neo-realism and scraps of fantasy.

Independent Units

There seems to be a mild epidemic in Hollywood of what *Time* magazine calls "the familiar . . . malady that fills big studio bosses with envy at seeing independent producers (even makers of grade B movies) making more money than they do". Three such bosses, Darryl F. Zanuck of Fox, Don Hartman of Paramount, and Jerry Wald of Columbia, have all recently been negotiating to set up independent units. There is also a movement among stars (Frank Sinatra with *Johnny Concho*, James Mason with *One in a Million*) to produce their own films, and other stars are now pleased to take a smaller lump payment for each picture plus a share in the profits. The financial reason for this trend is a capital-gains clause in the tax laws, which means that these film-makers, though dependent on the box-office success or failure of their product, have to pay only 25 per cent of their earnings in taxes instead of something like 90 per cent. There are non-financial reasons too: Zanuck has said he wants to be free of the responsibility of running a big studio in order to concentrate on his own productions (he has a deal with Fox to make 20 pictures in seven years and plans to film Hemingway's novel *Fiesta* in Europe). Actor-producers are often actors who, not always misguidedly, want to have a say in what parts they are to play. The move towards independence can be a good thing—if it leads to a search for fresh talent and an attempt to get away from the old formulas.

Italian Notes

ROBERT HAWKINS writes: It is perhaps significant that despite the prolonged crisis, principally caused by the continued delay over the new protective film aid law, which has bogged down Italian film activity for over a year, an encouraging amount of promising work has nevertheless come from the local studios. Not inappropriately, much of this good work has been done by a new group of film-makers which has come up in the wake of the first "wave" of post-war directors, and whose first films bid fair for the future.

Best known of these young directors is the youngest, Francesco Maselli, who came up through the school of documentary and whose *Gli Sbandati* raised critical temperatures at Venice last year, at the same time winning Maselli a medal for direction. It is pleasant to note that he has now been given an opportunity to follow up *Gli Sbandati* with a second film, *La Donna del Giorno*, from a subject of his own choosing. The first of three that he will make for producer Lorenzo Pegoraro, it is an attempt to lay bare the myth of celebrity, its deformation of reality, character and sense of proportion, and its consequent effects on contemporary society. Interestingly cast, *La Donna del Giorno* features Haya Hararit (the Israeli actress from Thorold Dickinson's *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*), Serge Reggiani and an Italian unknown, Virna Lisi.

Antonio Pietrangeli's background as a critic (*Bianco e Nero*) and screenwriter has served him in good stead in his first two films, *Celestina* and the recently released *Lo Scapolo*. While *Celestina* contained some acute notations, freshly observed, on the trials of a servant girl from the country on her first contact with the big city, *Lo Scapolo* already fulfils much of the earlier promise in its



"Cela s'appelle l'Aurore": a scene from Luis Bunuel's new French film.

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"Calle Mayor": Betsy Blair plays the leading part in Juan Antonio Bardem's new film, a study of life in a Spanish provincial town.

sharply etched picture of the eternal bachelor, nicely underplayed (for once) by Alberto Sordi.

In *Le Ragazze di San Frediano*, Valerio Zurlini, another recruit from documentary, has composed a sprightly and fresh picture of Florentine alley life in chronicling the adventures of a neighbourhood Casanova and his small-time amours. Zurlini, in his first feature, shows good film sense and a surprisingly firm guidance of his actors. One wonders, though, whether he too will remain restricted to that charming yet limited world which has long been the realm of Luciano Emmer, and from which Emmer has never successfully escaped.

Franco Rossi, another in the group of young film-makers, has not yet been given a chance to follow up his first film, *Amici per le Pelli*, which was seen at Venice last year and showed nice handling of a deceptively tricky subject: the comradeship of two schoolboys. Two other names, those of Franco Brusati and Giuseppe Bennati, should be added to the list of young directors. Brusati is the author of *Il Padrone Sono Me*, an unjustly slighted film version of a Panzini novel, while Bennati deserves notice on the basis of his charming first effort, *Musoduro*.

Meanwhile, members of Italy's "Old Guard" appear to be returning to the shelter of realism and more modest budgets. Castellani, following his Shakespearean interlude, is back on firm realistic ground with *I Sogni nel Cassetto*, a tale of youth at first grips with life, using a cast of unknowns and lesser-knowns. Fellini is about to begin *The Nights of Cabiria*, which stars his wife, Giulietta Masina. Alberto Lattuada's next should be *Gwendolina*—again youthful love, realistically observed. Visconti for the moment continues to think in terms of the theatre, where he has done important work during the past season.

One final note: all the above-mentioned films, with one exception (*Musoduro*), are or will be in black and white, and in normal dimensions.

Film Society Conference

LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE writes: The first National Film Society Conference recently organised by the Federation of Film Societies can be accounted an unqualified success, and the organisers should find sufficient encouragement within the movement to make it an annual event. Apart from formal lectures and discussions, the fact that it brought so many representatives together makes it a welcome development. Even more important, perhaps, was the appearance of representatives from overseas: the Film Society movement is one that needs constantly to be aware of what is happening abroad, and such contacts as were provided on this occasion can only prove advantageous. Reports of the subsidising of Film Society activities abroad by municipal and state depart-



"Calle Mayor": Bardem on location.

ments must inevitably have set many people thinking on similar possibilities for this country.

The opening session on May 26th was addressed by Mr. Harry Rée, headmaster of Watford Grammar School, whose approach to the cinema was somewhat coldly critical ("the worst thing about films", *The Times* reported him as saying, "was the portrayal of a world where values were distorted and power and wealth were the key to success"). Under the effervescent chairmanship of Professor Jack Isaacs, who directed an attack against the "Hollywood racket", the discussion developed energetically and provided a stimulating opening to the proceedings. Bernard Miles was informally reminiscent, while Sinclair Road urged greater co-operation between Film Societies and other groups within a particular area. Ernest Lindgren made a plea for a more active and extrovert policy on the part of the movement as a whole, with its consequent interest in all phases of the cinema—Film Archives, the industry and the lone-wolf creative artist.

The second day opened with reports given by delegates from America, Australia, France, Germany and Ireland on particular and general issues affecting the various Film Society movements, and the star turn of the afternoon was the introduction of his film *La Chienne* by a very exuberant Jean Renoir. The evening session closed with a discussion on film criticism in which Catherine de la Roche, Paul Dehn, Jacques Brunius and Dr. R. Aragno faced a barrage of questions. An informally convivial meeting of the delegates officially concluded the conference. An attractive display of film posters designed for Society shows was supplemented by commercial posters from many countries; there was also a technical stand displaying new apparatus and an information bureau for those interested in such matters.

The New Chaplin

Chaplin's new film, *A King in New York*, is being shot at Shepperton—under somewhat hush-hush conditions: at one time the unit had no publicity man, and visitors were discouraged. The



story, Chaplin has remarked, is rather like an obverse of an American in Paris. The monarch of a small European country is deposed after being suspected of trying to divert atomic production from warlike to peaceful ends. He goes to New York, is enthusiastically received, falls in love with a young huckstress (Dawn Addams), but is later accused of communist sympathies and asked to leave. He returns to Europe and a life of royal exile—"like all ex-kings, a little sad".

Work in Progress

U.S.A.

Vincente Minnelli: *Tea and Sympathy*, from the play by Robert Anderson, with Deborah Kerr, John Kerr.

Stanley Donen: *Funny Face*, a musical with Fred Astaire, Audrey Hepburn, Kay Thompson. (VistaVision: Technicolor.)

Joshua Logan: *Bus Stop*, from the play by William Inge, with Marilyn Monroe, Don Murray and Betty Field. (CinemaScope: Eastman Colour.)

Alfred Hitchcock: *The Wrong Man*, a melodrama, with Henry Fonda and Vera Miles.

Stanley Kramer: *The Pride and the Passion*, an adaptation of C. S. Forester's novel *The Gun*. With Cary Grant, Frank Sinatra, Sophia Loren. (VistaVision: Technicolor.)

Nicholas Ray: *One in a Million*, a story about the effects of cortisone, with James Mason and Barbara Rush. (CinemaScope: Eastman Colour.)

Joseph Mankiewicz: *The Quiet American*, from the novel by Graham Greene.

Fred Zinnemann: an adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, to be filmed mainly on location in Cuba. With Spencer Tracy. (WarnerColor).

Great Britain

Anatole Litvak: *Anastasia*, with Ingrid Bergman and Yul Brynner. (CinemaScope: Eastman Colour.)

Roberto Rossellini: *Seawolf and Biscuit*, from J. M. Scott's novel about the experiences of four people adrift on a raft after a shipwreck. With Richard Burton.

Laurence Olivier: *The Sleeping Prince*, from Terence Rattigan's stage comedy, with Olivier and Marilyn Monroe.

David Lean: *The Bridge over the River Kwai*, from the war novel by Pierre Boulle. (Technicolor.)

Roy Boulting: *Brothers in Law*, a comedy based on Henry Cecil's novel about the experiences of a young barrister. With Ian Carmichael.

France

Luis Bunuel: *La Mort en ce Jardin*, with Charles Vanel and Simone Signoret; location shooting in France and Mexico. (CinemaScope: colour.)

Gérard Philipe and Joris Ivens: *Till Eulenspiegel*, with Gérard Philipe. (Eastman Colour.)

Marcel Carné: *Le Pays d'ou je Viens*, from a story by Marcel Achard. With Francoise Arnoul, Gilbert Becaud. (Eastman Colour.)

Jean Delannoy: *Notre Dame de Paris*, adapted by Jean Aurenche and Jacques Prévert from the Victor Hugo novel. With Gina Lollobrigida, Anthony Quinn. (CinemaScope: Eastman Colour.)

Robert Bresson: *Un Condamné à mort s'est Echappé*, a story about a prisoner of war.

France-Japan

Yves Ciampi: *Un Français à Tokio*, an adaptation of the novel *L'Honorable Partie de Campagne*. To be made as a Franco-Japanese co-production, with location shooting in Japan, the film stars Jean Marais and Danielle Darrieux. (Eastman Colour.)

U.S.S.R.

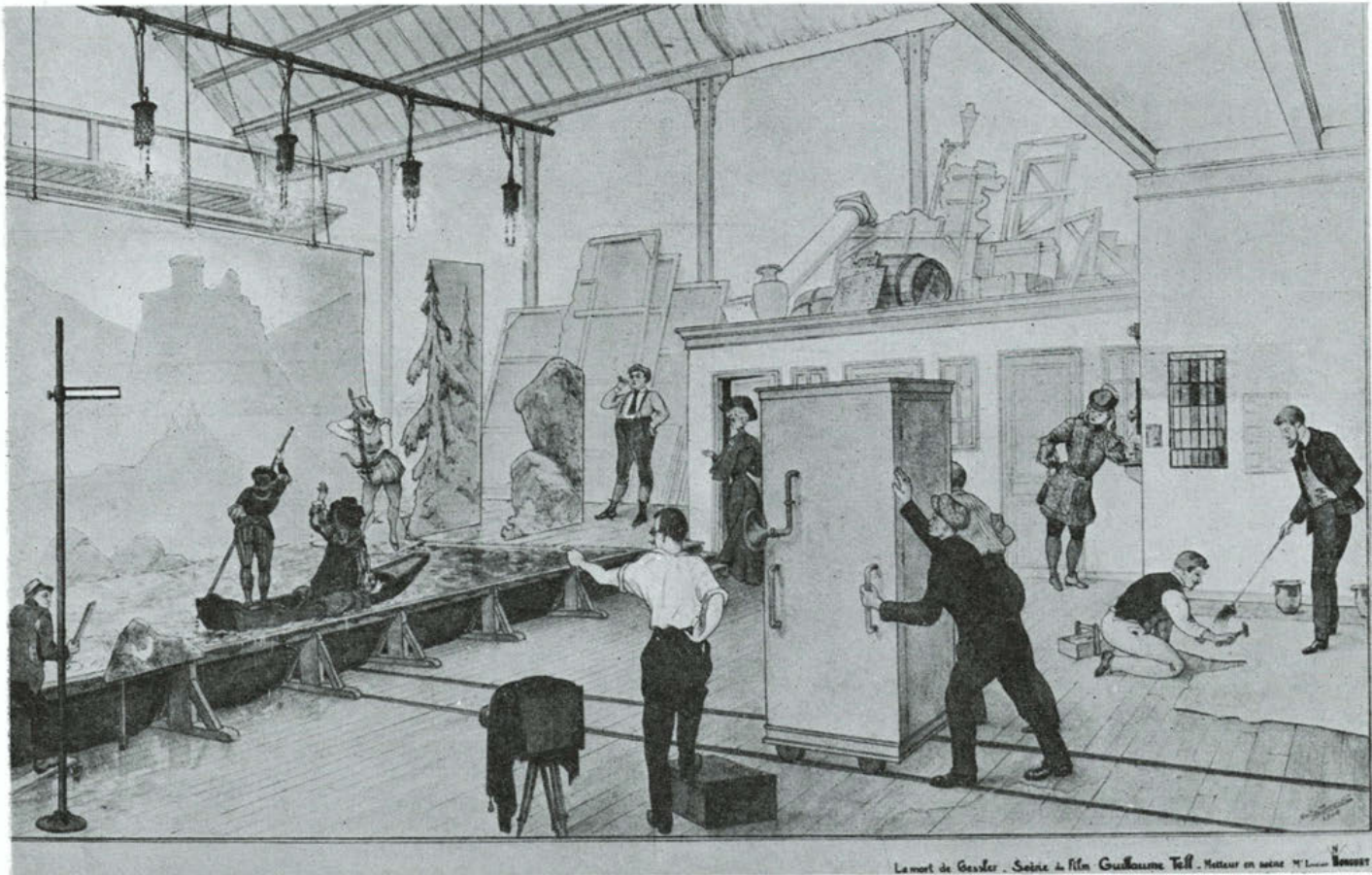
S. Samsonov: an adaptation of I. Popov's play *Family*, dealing with the early life of Lenin.

G. Roshal: *The Ordeal*, from the novel by Tolstoy.

Sergei Gerasimov: an adaptation of Mikhail Sholokhov's novel *Quiet Flows the Don*.

"Lust for Life": Vincente Minnelli's new film, produced by John Houseman, is based on a best-selling study of Van Gogh. Kirk Douglas (Van Gogh) with Pamela Brown.

The first sixty years



Production: shooting a costume film, "William Tell" at the Pathé Studios at Vincennes, 1903. Watercolour by Gaston Dumesnil.

by William Whitebait

EVERYONE goes to Trafalgar Square, and there, under Nelson, among the pigeons and pavement artists, the bronze generals, the Commonwealth houses, may be seen the freshest, oddest, liveliest exhibition London has known for some time.

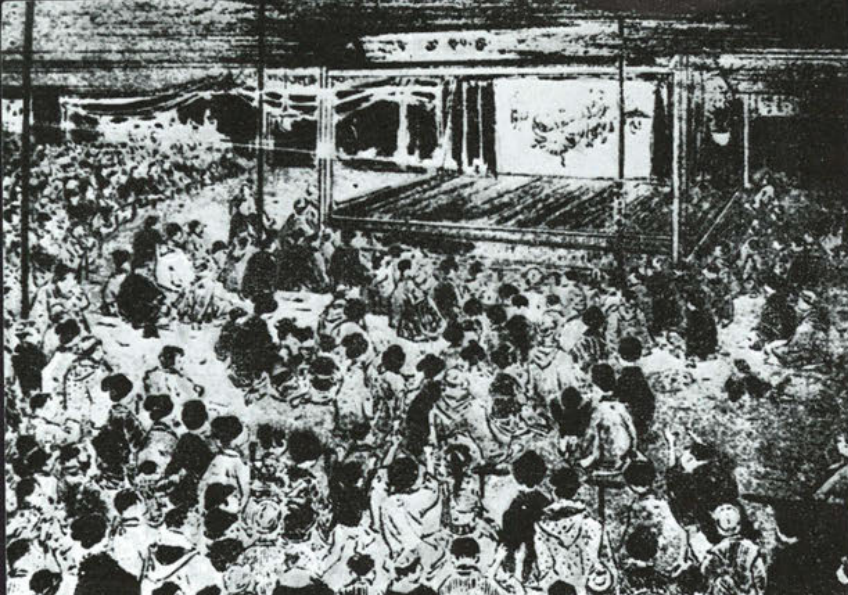
Along the well-beaten track between Trafalgar and Haymarket the crowd has marked a new doorway, a loop of discovery. You turn in at the entrance to Hampton's old show-rooms, to find yourself in a bright cave flanked by—what can they be? Not winged angels blowing trumpets, *non angeli sed Angli*, typists and dons and matrons and bus-conductors, you or I, turning film while the sun shines.

Turning film—it seems a happy activity: a conjuring trick, maybe; all that enjoys movement is shot, shot as the sportsman kills birds, but then every bird, all the dead instants, will merge and revive in their pristine motion. Hey, presto!

This the mind in its more moulding, fugitive way has always accomplished; and at the end of the hall in which

we stand gazing, a screen shows cut-outs of those who began catching images and running them into a stream, together with ancient voices prophesying film. Michaelangelo dreamed of it (didn't he?), and Plato's vision of human life was of people in a black cave regarding a screen. The pre-history of film draws together a da Vinci notebook and a Milton battlepiece (Eisenstein dug this out), kaleidoscopes and flip-overs, a horse-lover who captured his favourite eyeful in a series of snapshots which could be reanimated as Running Horse. Not Shakespeare's art, but the first sensitised plate and at last the mounted box with a handle, held the mirror up to nature.

Gadgets and their inventors—Lumière, lightener—bring us to early film-makers, and to the first strong blow of imagination. Méliès has a whole world, a room, to himself. He plays with vaudeville, builds up a train smash in tableau, melodramatises, muses, and on the back of commercially scrolled paper draws stars, starfish, Cancer: he is packing up for that *Impossible Voyage*.



Audience: a Vitascope demonstration in Tokyo in 1897. From a magazine illustration.

His medium wasn't quite ready for him, or he for it; but the crowd will pause. Something amazing, something Disney would never dream of, hooks the eye.

The whole of this ground floor, coming to Chaplin and Griffith, the far-flung passions of a Nazimova, a Valentino, early U.S.S.R., early Clair, UFA, is contained by Silence. Don't let us—especially today—forget that film grew out of silence; silence was its childhood, and no art—as no artist—can afford *not* to be haunted by childhood. I doubt if any good film has ever been made by taking for granted all the mechanical aids to film-making. That would be to prolong a conjuring trick which has grown too easy: Cinerama, for example, the *faux primitif*. Instead, the film-maker whose instinct is to say to himself "Here's an empty screen, let's fill it" will temper this gush with "Being careful, however, only to put in what *can't be left out*". Start from that end, and sound will be the breaking of silence, colour of monotony.

Stairs lead to sound; music—the same music—is communicated from room to room; Clair, Chaplin make the difficult crossing; new voices, new attitudes, new nationalisms arise. In a sense it is growing up, but of growing up too quickly and completely, and being caught by one's own cleverness. As a critic, on my weekly round, I find myself sometimes looking for a corner from which thought and feeling have not been squeezed out.

Here, a critical eye has already chosen what we shall remember (though this will send us off along our own tram-lines into the past), what is today and what may be tomorrow. Mr. Richard Buckle, who caught the fancy with his Diaghilev exhibition, has staged this one more richly and more amusingly, as suits the material. He had the nucleus of the Paris exhibition to build round; and fascinating it is. Here is a print of a Japanese audience squatting horse-shoe round a screen in 1897, and another glimpse from Japan, a comedy of the 1910's, all Keystone except for the faces. Jean Hugo's designs for *Joan of Arc* point to the French room, from the same—if older—hand. Chaplin's *City Lights* suit preserves the flower in the coat. Prints and costumes, peepshows, huge stills, photographic mosaics are not merely exhibited but staged.

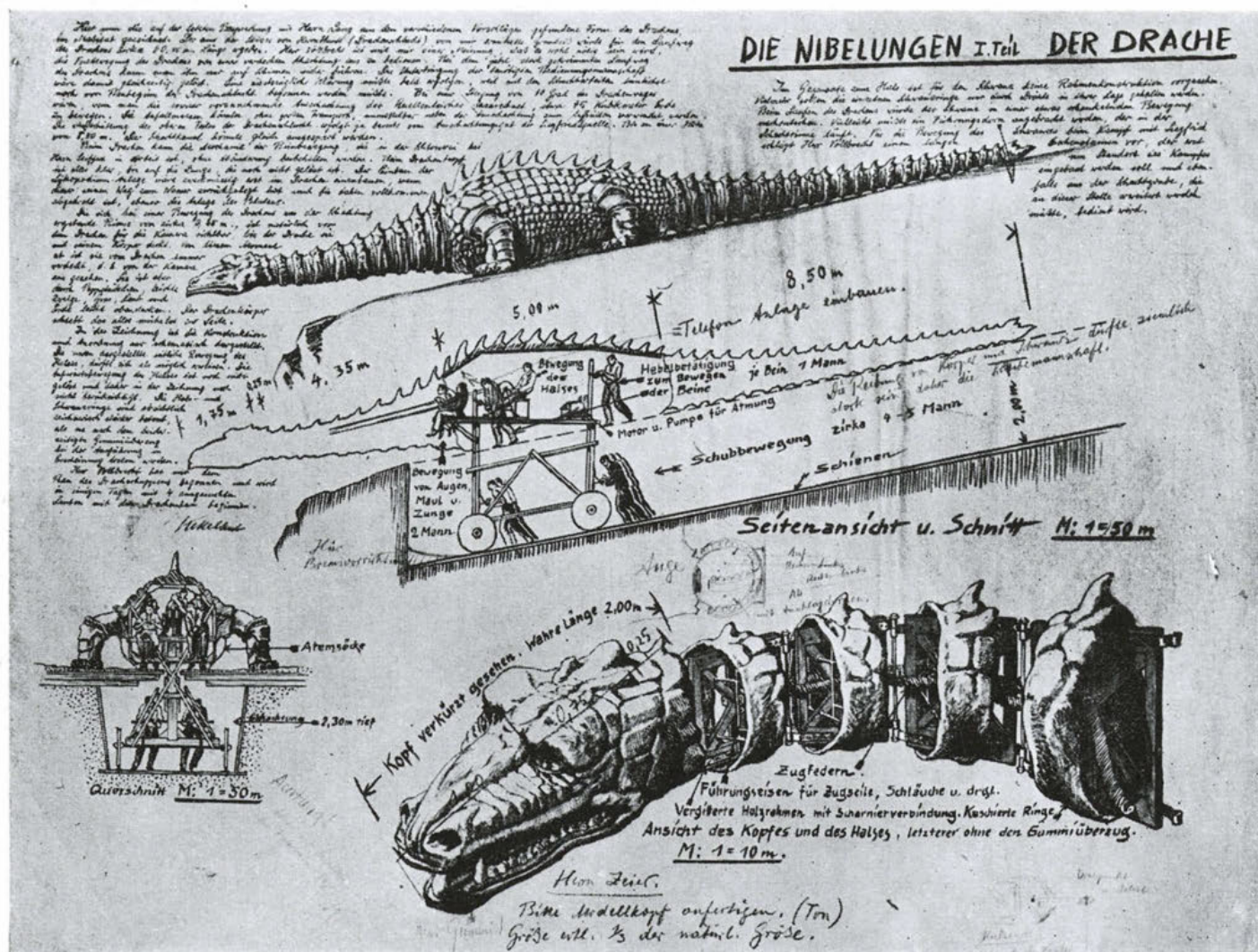
Design: a sketch by Alexandre Benois for a set design in Abel Gance's "Napoleon".

Inheriting this, Mr. Buckle has given ingenious play to his own ideas, which are meant first to win stray eyes (without them no exhibition can succeed) and next to engross those for whom film has become an addiction. Does he make off with both? No doubt; it's not easy for me to judge, because I have been an addict since, aged seven, I sat in a rocking cabin on the end of a pier thunderstruck by a movie of heaving seas. His special effects, made in collaboration both with unknown artists and with those as familiar as Piper and Lancaster, are in the way of vistas, surprises; the fairground booth in the distance with a flap of tent revealing the kinematograph within; fantastic sunset silhouettes of furniture beyond which appear the Stars at Home; the Gangster's Table, on which, among such objects as a gun, a glass, a hand at poker, is a newspaper with photographs—one of them moves. A final eye-tickler throws one's shadow on a screen, and one advances to meet a nightmare of distorting mirrors. A small audience will have gathered to witness this confusion.

One of the best presentations is the English Room. A city-scape has been built up and round in photographs: to the left Wapping walls, of the kind which loom beautifully in Lorenza Mazzetti's *Together*, ahead a panorama of the river, to the right a row of small shops. The pavements slope up to these backgrounds, and in each pavement, like puddles mirroring the sky, are illuminated scenes. The names and the films so inset include the early Hitchcocks, the Ealing comedies, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *Evergreen*, *Brief Encounter*, *Henry V*, *Odd Man Out*, *Great Expectations*, and among the documentaries the classics of the 'thirties, *Night Mail* and *Song of Ceylon*, and the wartime films of Humphrey Jennings. And is that all the British film adds up to? Our only genius, Chaplin, has yet to make his first English film. Hitchcock went to Hollywood. Jennings stayed. He is our brightest light. We are hopelessly wedded to the second-hand and the second-rate. Does this seem harsh? Olivier? He belongs to the history of Shakespeare rather than of film. Only in the New Realists led by Lindsay Anderson and Lorenza Mazzetti do we seem now to be producing a live movement—one which may infect others to use their heads like artists and not like ironmongers.

Downstairs, in the rooms devised by Pinewood Studios, one could spend almost hours following the twenty-two stages of film-making, from Story Department to Poster Publicity and Lenses. I found quite fascinating the make-up saloon with all shades of lipstick





Special Effects: scale drawings showing the mechanism of the dragon featured in "Siegfried".

and a row of baldish cork heads that would go well in a Cocteau film, and the props room next door, where the works of Ariosto sit cheek by jowl with old gloves, fire-tongs, suits of armour.

One other bright notion of Buckle's plunges us into the future and a division of ways. On the wall through which we have come in are two huge scrawled manifestos: the first from Mr. Laurence Alloway, who shouts that the only film is the film popular, the long-queued demotic dream. This seems to me, in face of the evidence we have come through, stark lunacy. There is a half-way case for the popular legend (*King Kong*) as against the mass-produced *objet d'art* (*The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Moulin Rouge*, etc.). Whole-hog, it only makes the sort of sense that would reduce literature to *The Rosary* and *Tarzan*, art to "Bubbles", music to *The Maid of the Mountains*, religion to Billy Graham and philosophy to Lord Beaverbrook's *Success*. A second gigantic scrawl from Mr. Lindsay Anderson has no difficulty in smashing this eggshell sentimentalism. The long wall on either side illustrates the argument with a *collage* of the brand of scene appealing to each contestant. What

is Mr. Alloway's favourite at the moment? Cinerama.

From this conflict my instinct is to return to the entrance hall and do the whole show again. There are self-portraits by the more self-adoring stars to be relished, a sock (among costumes) from a mysterious *Mr. West in the Land of the Soviets*, the dicta of the great floating over the air, glimpses of *Louisiana Story*, *Potemkin*, *Kane*, Charlie, Japan (there's a territory to explore!), Mme. Rosay's dress in *La Kermesse Heroique*, early Disney, early Sturges and all. Those not there I begin to put in.

But at last I must drag myself out, to cross once again Trafalgar Square. I see film everywhere: in the visitors and the pigeons, the street photographer (hero for a comedy), the pigeons sent wheeling by a backfire so that their swift shadows swoop over the slower buses, an assignation at the National Gallery, a queue drama where the buses pile up beside St. Martin's, the filmability of Charing Cross hotel—or better St. Pancras. All that's wrong with British film-makers is that when they step out they don't see that the life round them is so much more entertaining than theirs.

THE CYNICAL AUDIENCE



The fashion in monsters: a scene from "It Came from Outer Space".

by Walter Lassally

THE various movements aimed at raising standards of film appreciation among the general public have been in existence now for a good many years, and it seems relevant to inquire what significant headway has been made during that time. This is a question not readily answered; statistics, even if available, cannot be a reliable guide to such a complicated, debatable and changeable subject as audience taste, but it should at least be possible to draw up a temporary balance sheet.

The most important factor on the credit side has been the growth from very modest beginnings of the specialised cinema and film society movement. This has played a significant part in bringing intelligent and artistic films to the notice of the British public, and it is largely due to their spadework that the number of cinemas showing continental films has vastly increased during the postwar years and that some good continental films are now gradually finding their way into the programme of the circuits.

Two questions remain, however—what percentage of Britain's cinemagoers attends this kind of show, and what influence have these endeavours had on the mass audience outside the specialised circles? It is in the answers to these questions that the symptoms of failure loom large. No really accurate figures exist, but it can safely be assumed that less than one per cent of Britain's filmgoers attend these types of specialised show, and among this one per cent must be counted a good many who have not been attracted from

the circuit audience but have come from that considerable section of the population who do not normally attend the cinema at all.

II

Factors influencing mass audience taste can be very roughly divided under two headings: the films themselves, and factors outside the film industry, involving the whole field of popular entertainment and the influence exerted by press, radio and television on a malleable public opinion. Audience taste in the cinema is only a relatively small part of an entire cultural pattern, and in isolating the cinema one is bound to deal in effects rather than in sociological causes. Also to be taken into account, though, is the general and persistent attitude of the British man-in-the-street towards art and culture. Nowhere else in the world does this latter word have such a disagreeable connotation as in Britain. Whereas on the continent the artist is traditionally respected, the average Englishman will cheerfully condemn him with the term "highbrow" and will defend to the death his right to remain ignorant in these matters. "I know what I like and I don't need any critic to tell me" is an attitude as familiar as it is unshakeable. The best answer to this was provided in *Sullivan's Travels*, where the producer tells the director: "They didn't like your film in Pittsburgh and they know what they like in Pittsburgh." The director replies, "If they knew what they liked, they wouldn't live in Pittsburgh."

Another strong factor is the general atmosphere in the country at any given time. Thus the 'thirties had a generally optimistic atmosphere, the 'forties one of collective endeavour and achievement, while the temper of the 'fifties has been mainly apathetic. The films of these decades mirror the changing atmosphere fairly accurately—and the present reluctance of British film-makers seriously to tackle contemporary subjects can be interpreted as a reflection of a general apathy. Now, however, there is an added factor which has not appeared so strongly before. Although the British market has been dominated for many years by American films, these pictures, more personality-conscious and more stridently concerned with contemporary issues than the native model, have probably never made such a powerful impression on British audiences as they do today. It is the atmosphere of contemporary America—impatient and cynical, with overtones of hysteria—that will at the moment most strongly influence mass audience taste, tending in many ways to depress it.

The effect of bad films on their audience, and especially on juvenile and adolescent minds in that audience, has been a subject of discussion for many years. Now, however, let us be concerned with the effect not on their actions in real life, but on their reactions to good films. However often film producers may have been exhorted to lead public taste rather than to follow it, they still seem to be doing the latter. So the films produced today are a reflection of contemporary audience taste—notably of the ideas and standards held by the younger section of the audience—and this in turn is partly a reflection of contemporary American attitudes.

The subjects chosen for production now do not greatly vary from those of the 'thirties. Then, as now, films often ran in cycles, but cycles do not explain the fact that the treatment accorded to these same subjects is usually very different today. The reasons for these differences, and for some significant gaps in the selection of subjects themselves, must lie as much with changing audience tastes as with the shift in production policies brought about by rising costs, allegiance to colour and to the big screens, which no longer make it profitable for film companies to cater to the minority



Comedy in the 'thirties: Patsy Kelly and Constance Bennett in "*Merrily We Live*".

audience and demand a production schedule conceived in terms of best-sellers.

III

Before and during the war, a great many intelligent and witty comedies were made and ran with fair success in the mass audience cinemas—films like *Palm Beach Story*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *The Philadelphia Story* and *Merrily We Live*. All these pictures contained wit of a subtlety rarely encountered today. The custard-pie comedies naturally existed then as they do now, but the sophisticated comedy of those days has no real contemporary equivalent. For sheer good-humour, films such as *Adam's Rib* and *The Seven Year Itch*, though better than most of their contemporaries, are just not in the same class as the older pictures. And if one likes to go back even further, *The General* and *The Navigator* contained enough brilliantly inventive gags to make five present-day comedies each. In fact, some comedies are still using the same gags without even bothering to give them a new look. The demand for comedy is now greater than ever, but it is geared towards slapstick: subtlety and the polished comedy of manners are out of fashion with an impatient audience which prefers its humour tougher and more cynical.

Another aspect of this same tendency is the reception often accorded today to honest sentiment and the portrayal of human dignity on the screen. Perhaps audiences have been put off in the past by films which have been cloyingly sentimental or have overtly preached; now, at any rate, they often seem unwilling or unable to accept even a straightforward treatment. At a London showing of *Marty*, for instance, the tender but unspectacular love scenes between Clara and Marty led to restlessness in the audience, a large section of which was obviously on the side of Marty's rather



Comedy in the 'fifties: Marilyn Monroe and Tom Ewell in "*The Seven Year Itch*".



Small town drama: Lillian Gish in a scene from D.W. Griffith's "True Heart Susie".

shiftless acquaintances and of the wolf who deserts Clara at the dance for a prettier and more worldly girl. At a recent showing of *They Were Expendable*, too, the quietly tender love scene between John Wayne and Donna Reed was received with derisive shouts of "Have a go, mate!" and uneasy scuffling greeted the scene in which the girl is entertained to dinner by the ship's company. There is a gentleness and respect for finer feelings in these scenes which seems wholly out of key with the prevailing mood of the contemporary audience. It is the cynical approach that is nowadays taken for the natural one; it is always understood instantly and usually relished.

Even the National Film Theatre audience, which one might have imagined as exempt from, if not actually opposed to, these tendencies, has proved a significant offender at some recent showings. The mere fact that a film is silent is likely to be taken as a cue for loud comments and raucous laughter; and it is often clear that this is more than a superior amusement at styles of acting and presentation that are no longer current. One senses, in fact, that what the audience is really expressing is an instinctive, perhaps self-protective, reaction against delicacy of sentiment or simple open-heartedness. Thus the direct, unsophisticated humanity of *Tol'able David* was regarded as laughable, while *Witchcraft Through the Ages*—a remarkable film by any standards—was roared through as a farce. Taking the long-term view, this kind of insensitivity and cheap emotional cynicism on the part of a National Film Theatre audience seems even more disquieting than hooliganism in the mass audience.

Confronted with a fickle and cynical public, an audience exposed to so much mass-produced entertainment in the home that it has become more knowing and hardened in its reactions to the whole business of being entertained, Hollywood producers appear to rely increasingly on gimmicks and phoney, tricked-up situations. Many of their present-day dramas bring to mind the popular radio phrase, "You silly twisted boy", exhibiting as they do an over-worked neuroticism. This neurotic tendency can originate in the script itself or in the treatment, manifesting itself alike in neurotic characterisation and performances or a neurotic striving for effect on the part of the director. *East of Eden*,

Small town drama: Richard Davalos, James Dean and Julie Harris in "East of Eden".

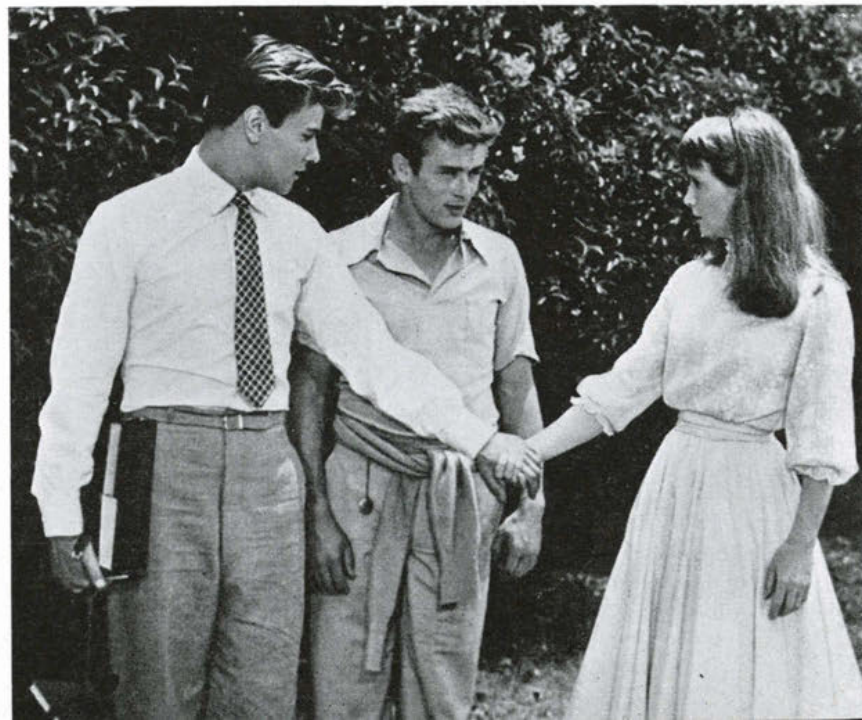
which imposes its specifically contemporary brand of neuroticism on a 1913 story, is a particularly striking example, when compared with films set in about the same period but produced in the 'thirties or 'forties (*Magnificent Ambersons*, *An American Romance*). *Not as a Stranger*, *Johnny Guitar* and *The High and the Mighty* (in practically all the leading characters), the new style in post-Freudian Westerns, and the Mickey Spillane films, with their conscientiously whipped up atmosphere of sex and violence, all contain this fundamentally unhealthy element, which seems to derive from a conviction that today's audiences simply will not take a straightforward, honest drama dealing with the lives of reasonably average men and women.

Precisely how far this belief is justified seems questionable. On the one hand, most audiences can still respond to the good "old-fashioned" treatment when given the chance, as the general success of films like *Marty* or *Born Yesterday* demonstrates; on the other, there is the evidence of hooliganism during serious or tender scenes and a complete absence of protest, either in the cinemas themselves or via the box-office, at films which flagrantly and deliberately exploit the worst in human nature. And the popularity of the cycle of spurious science fiction films, the "X" certificate adventures of things, beasts and creatures, suggests that the monsters are not always to be found only on the screen.

IV

It is the sociological film that perhaps has suffered most under conditions where the audience is not prepared really to listen, and is mainly interested in plenty of violent surface action. The films themselves, and the publicity campaigns for them, have thus become more overtly sensational, so that the underlying purpose—making the audience aware of, or angry about, a social evil—is often completely lost. Whereas an audience cannot come away from a showing of *The Grapes of Wrath* without an appreciation of the problem of the Dust Bowl and an immense sympathy for people like the Joads, it is doubtful whether an audience emerging from *On the Waterfront* has any significant thoughts or feelings about the problems of New York dock-workers.

The dilemma of how to make the audience listen, without the dreaded word "educational" being brought in, has led to some strange compromise solutions. In *The Sniper*, for instance, a straight lecture on the desirability of mental treatment for sexual offenders after their first offence is sandwiched into a story which openly invites the audience to share the excitement of the sniper in stalking his female victims. And surely the producers must have realised that



the two moods are wholly opposed—it is the thrills that the audience will remember, not the lecture. *Blackboard Jungle* suffers from a similar uneasy compromise. On the one hand there is the courage to tackle such a subject, with its ugly implications for contemporary American society, and a treatment which appears sincere and does not pull its punches. On the other, the social basis of the whole problem, so essential to a proper perspective on the story, has been completely omitted; and the solution—“getting at” the good in the boys via the choir school and removing the two ringleaders to an institution—is facile, to say the least. Further evidence of compromise is the opening jive number during the credit titles, setting a sensational instead of a serious mood and inviting the audience to enjoy rather than condemn the hooliganism that follows. It is a sign of the times that films such as *Blackboard Jungle*, *The Harder They Fall* and *Man With the Golden Arm* should often be unquestioningly accepted as serious exposés of their subjects. Yet one need only place them in perspective by comparison with real social films like the Soviet *Road to Life* or the American *Fury* or *Grapes of Wrath* to notice a dangerous and significant difference.

How then can a social problem be presented by the contemporary film-maker? Only by being brutally frank, by ensuring that the audience is sickened, not merely excited, by violence, and that real fear takes the place of a “delicious chill running up and down the spine” can one hope to force one’s point today. Bunuel did this brilliantly in *Los Olvidados*, and both Fritz Lang’s *The Big Heat* and *The Phenix City Story*, a powerful and forthright film, represent steps in that direction. But if, as in the case of *The Wild One*, the story is played quite straight, the director runs the risk that the audience will just enjoy the action and take the eventual triumph of law and order as a conventional ending, necessitated by censorship and the Production Code, and easily forgotten. At a recent showing of this film in Berlin, all the early scenes of hooliganism were received with loud laughter. The director’s approach was far from cynical, but the audience immediately assumed it to be so and reacted accordingly. This attitude is not found only in Berlin. In *Phenix City Story*, a young husband is inflamed by an act of violence on the part of the racketeers into joining those endeavouring to oppose them. When his wife cries out, panic-stricken, “Don’t go” she was greeted with derisive laughter by a London audience, who were already relishing the fight ahead and swept any obstruction aside as being ridiculous. Small wonder, perhaps, if they had been brought in to see the film by the posters outside, which showed a floozie in a saloon with the captions “Dramatic exposé of America’s wickedest city”, and “Filmed on the spot, sin by sin, shock by shock”.

In this context, the “X” certificate, created to enable adult audiences to see adult films, has been particularly abused. Dozens of continental films of dubious quality have had long runs in London’s specialised cinemas, often backed up by lurid advertising campaigns shrewdly based on X and sex, while really adult films such as *Cristo Proibito*, *I Bambini di Guardano* and *Ugetsu Monogatari* have not as yet received a single public showing in this country. Even some film society programmes have shown an unworthy tendency to pander in this way to their box-office at the expense of more significant productions.

V

Since mass audience taste is firmly rooted in the social conditions encompassing that audience, the Eastern European countries provide an interesting contrast. Developed in a positive and constructive atmosphere, the films of these countries have generally been straightforward, conscientious and somewhat naive. In fact, audiences in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have until fairly recently been almost starved of drama and excitement, since film-makers leant over backwards to avoid these lest they should be accused of



“An infectious spirit of joie de vivre . . .” A scene from “A Pedagogical Poem”, the recent Soviet remake of “The Road to Life”.

lack of objectivity or sensationalism. Yet the very naivete of these films can come as a distinct relief after the oppressive neuroticism of some Western productions. *Cavalier of the Gold Star*, *True Friends*, *The Big Family*—the problems in these films may be over-simplified, and the characters may sometimes be only “types”, but an infectious spirit of endeavour and *joie de vivre* comes through, which is only too rare in the films of the West today.

Eastern European audiences also appear markedly more responsive than our own to intelligent stories, since many straightforward biographies, historical subjects and literary classics have been filmed and successfully shown. For all its faults and limitations, this is an atmosphere fundamentally healthier than our own, since the film-maker is practically assured of an audience which, though perhaps no more discerning than ours, is prepared at least to listen to what he has to say.

In the West it is increasingly difficult to make a film with something to say—not a “message” picture, just one demanding a little thought and attention from the audience—without risking box-office failure. Conditioned by a variety of influences, by no means restricted to the cinema, to assume that violence is as natural as eating and drinking, that “love” and “sex” are virtually synonymous and that war is a glorious and exhilarating experience, the mass audience will inevitably prefer *Battle Cry* to *A Walk in the Sun*, *New York Confidential* to *Force of Evil*, and *Magnificent Obsession* to *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. It is as though the old demand for a happy ending were now applied to the entire film—the treatment must falsify the subject to become acceptable to the jaded but insatiable audience. A good story no longer seems enough in itself: it must be expanded, glossed up, given production value and a stereophonic celestial choir. The contemporary director need not be a story-teller provided that he is an efficient ringmaster.

There are those, of course, who believe that the public gets the films it deserves and that the raising of standards in audience taste is an unattractive if not impossible task. For them, there can only be one answer: the responsibility connected with the purveying of mass entertainment in our time is enormous, yet is scarcely ever acknowledged by those on whom it squarely rests. It is inevitably easier to be cynical than to be constructive, and in these days of great emphasis on the rights and privileges of free individuals it is all too easy to forget the collective responsibilities which any society must place upon those individuals if it wishes to call itself civilised.

Panorama at Cannes

by LINDSAY ANDERSON



If you live long enough in a city, you can forget that nature exists. You can begin to imagine, or to fear, that those dead suburban streets will stretch out for ever, that the gasometers and shopping centres and housing estates will end by swallowing every green thing.

For us, who live in Britain, the cinema threatens to become a city of this kind, a city whose gasometers bear names like Odeon, Ritz and Gaumont, whose streets are called Rank and Fox and M.G.M. No wonder we grow at times to imagine that this is the whole world, and to fear that it is sterile and dying. "Is television killing the cinema?"—so journalists are instructed by their editors to ask the great men of the film industry. And the great men look serious, as they envisage the possibility: or assume an air of confidence as they dismiss it. But ask this question outside Britain or America; ask a Russian, or a Chinese, or a Mexican director, and all you are likely to get is a frown of incomprehension.

To reduce such questions to their proper significance is perhaps the first great function of an international film festival. With all the chicanery that went along with Cannes this year, all the distasteful publicity-hunting and snobbery—"the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes"—there was the marvellous, heartening opportunity of witnessing the undiminished vitality of this medium which we in this country are in danger of crassly allowing to run to waste.

It is astonishing how perspectives change and how directions can be observed when you get out in the open air. In London (and no doubt more so in Birmingham or Newcastle) a film like *The Harder They Fall* may seem welcome, even progressive, by comparison with the slack rubbish of last week and the weeks to come. But put it up against even a quite routine production from Russia, and see how its significance alters, how degraded (and degrading) appear its slick sentimentality, its infected preoccupation with violence. And so with the situation as a whole: to make right conclusions, you must have all the data. If you have seen no new picture from Hungary since *Hortobagy*, and nothing important from Russia since *Ivan the Terrible*, you will be incompetent to estimate the position of the creative artist in the political systems of the East; or to judge whether his ideological obligations are more or less frustrating than the economic chains which fetter the film makers of the West.

If the cinema is alive, it must be moving: but in what direction? This also is difficult to perceive in our domestic confinement. Here and in America (and increasingly, it is to be feared, in Western Europe as well), the obsession is with the technical developments which have issued from Hollywood in recent years. But I think of a distinguished director I met in Paris, whose last film, made some eighteen months ago, has earned its French producer many millions of francs. Not wishing to repeat himself, this director has refused all inducements to make the same story over again, with different actors and title. But his new subject is unconventional. A year's struggle has been necessary, therefore, to find backing for it; and then the proviso is made that the film must be shot in CinemaScope. The director struggles again, and at last is forced to agree—on condition that the film is in black-and-white. But

Twentieth Century-Fox will only allow CinemaScope lenses to be used on colour films; and they will not accept the picture for distribution unless it is shot in CinemaScope... "Progress" is hardly the word for a state of affairs like this.

II

The cinema of 1956 still has its avant-garde, but its direction has nothing to do with technical development, and very little to do with Hollywood. The significant movement today is away from the spurious inflation, the theatricalism that has so far tended to characterise the use of the new techniques, further and further into reality. Perhaps this is why the most valuable work now being done is often from small countries without great resources, from industries that are only just struggling into existence, from artists who are still able to retain a measure of independence, and to work with material they intimately understand. Lorenza Mazzetti's *Together*, which was Britain's only really creative contribution to the festival, is precisely in this line. And another remarkable instance is the Indian film *Pather Panchali*, the first film of a Bengali artist, Satyajit Ray, which dominated Cannes this year, surpassing new work by artists of the calibre of Donskoi, De Sica and Kurosawa. Not that this is a picture which owes nothing to the European masters: Ray has a cultivated appreciation of the Western cinema, and when Renoir made *The River* in Bengal he was able to follow the shooting closely. That he learned much from this experience is obvious: yet he has made a film that is purely and deeply his own.

"To admire on principle", Coleridge observed, "is the only way to imitate without loss of originality". Ray's admiration of Renoir is of this kind. Turning back, indeed, to an article which he contributed to *Sequence* in 1950 ("Renoir in Calcutta"), I find him writing: "To Renoir, there is nothing more important in a film than the emotional integrity of the emotions it depicts. Technique is useful and necessary in so far as it contributes towards this integrity. Beyond that it is generally intrusive and exhibitionist". And this is the quality of Ray's own film. Humbly, patiently, his camera reaches forward into life, exploring and exposing, with reverence and wonder.

Pather Panchali is adapted from a well-known Bengali novel (literally the title means "Song of the Little Road"), but the translation into terms of cinema is complete. It is the story of a poor family living in a hopeless, patched-up hovel, in a small village. The father is a clerk, who dreams ineptly of being a poet; he is badly paid and sometimes not paid at all. His wife has to make do from day to day with rice and fruit and meat if they are lucky. There are two children, a girl and a boy, and an incredibly wizened, capricious old lady whom they know as 'Auntie'. The lives of these people are all the story of the film: there is no tight dramatic construction or conventional plot. The tension is poetic rather than dramatic, created by the artist's intimate contact with his material, physical as well as emotional. To make *Pather Panchali* Ray must have lived as closely with his characters as Flaherty had to live with his Polynesians, when he made *Moana*.

Everything is significant: small joys, bitternesses and



Neo-realism with the gloves on: De Sica directs his non-professional players, Gabriella Pallotti and Giorgio Listuzzi, in "*Il Tetto*".

tragedies intermingled with the hard routine of every day. The mother prepares a meal, and the children play. Around the wretched house are shady woodland paths, stretches of water, fields of tall feathered grass. The children have no lack of delights and mysteries: the sweet-seller passing down the track, calling his wares; an express train charging powerfully across the plain; a performance by a troupe of strolling players. The film's rhythm is slow, absorbed, reflecting the rhythm of simple lives. There are too many mouths to feed, and the old lady, grown irritating beyond endurance, is turned away by the mother. She goes off to die alone in the forest—*Tobacco Road* shorn of its grotesque comedy. Insect life stirs the surface of the placid lake; the leaves of the water-lilies flap in the rising wind; the rains begin. The little girl catches cold and becomes ill: rain beats into the hut, the threadbare hangings collapse, and there is nothing to protect the feverish little body. She dies. In the end the rest of the family move away into the city: a snake glides slowly into the deserted home: father, mother and son sit patiently in their wagon. With this sad, humanistic affirmation, resisting the rhetoric of a long shot, tenaciously holding his people's faces, Ray ends his film.

III

Pather Panchali is a beautiful picture, completely fresh and personal, which required great courage and perseverance to make. (Shooting was brought to a halt for a considerable period because money ran out.) It is to compliment Ray, not to deny his originality, that I mention names like Renoir and Flaherty. And another fertilising influence has surely been the neo-realism of De Sica, Zavattini and Rossellini, with its equal rejection of dramatic conventions, and its passionate concern with the lives of the underprivileged. This cross-reference lent a particular, and somewhat melancholy, interest to the showing at Cannes of *Il Tetto* (*The Roof*), the new picture by De Sica and Zavattini, produced by De Sica himself, and announced as an uncompromising return to the principles of neo-realism.

Like *Bicycle Thieves*, *Il Tetto* is a story of working class life in Rome. A boy and a girl marry, and have nowhere to live: they move in with the boy's family, but the lack of space and privacy is intolerable: they decide to build their own home (the boy is a mason) on a stretch of waste land. The crux of the story is the need to complete the building

in a single night: if they can finish by morning, they will be safe, for the police have no authority to demolish the house once it has a roof. De Sica has handled this simple yet pregnant tale in classic neo-realist style, with a cast of non-professional players, on real locations. Zavattini's script (the inspiration of which was an actual incident) abounds in sharp, incidental observation. Yet the whole thing lacks freshness or inner conviction. We have seen it all before: nothing new is being communicated.

One must not use one film as a stick with which to beat another, but the juxtaposition of *Pather Panchali* and *Il Tetto* make certain conclusions inescapable. If it is to survive, the neo-realist cinema must progress, must penetrate deeper and deeper into reality, with poetry and love. Artifice is fatal to it, and so is the faintest suspicion of patronage. For all his formulated objections to plotting, Zavattini's script for *Il Tetto* is tremendously "worked", stuffed with *trouvailles*, colourfully touched in. And De Sica's direction, busy, detailed and brilliant, emphasises this elaboration of incident, to the exclusion of those vital passages of silence or quiescence, where narrative can be forgotten, and the moment can expand and blossom into poetry. One senses a fatal detachment between director and material, an attitude nearer to indulgent patronage than to love. It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that, with a film like *Il Tetto*, De Sica and Zavattini have reached the point where they are exploiting poverty rather than embracing it.

IV

But *Il Tetto* was also a film which required courage to make: the Italian government has no love for film-makers who insist on exposing the poverty and injustices in their society to the critical eyes of the world. Nor is the public itself enthusiastic: we all know the fate of *Umberto D.* Perhaps indeed De Sica himself, for all his desire to return to neo-realism, was unwilling to risk such another failure. The polished lighting and sentimental music of *Il Tetto* hint strongly at a neo-realist film for commercial consumption.

The problems raised by this picture's failure spread wide. What relationship can we expect between the creative filmmaker and Western society? Is there no possibility except unequal conflict? Must social themes be avoided altogether? What sign is there in the Western cinema of a positive and vigorous statement of those values which the politicians expect us to be eager to defend with our lives? If we take the offerings at Cannes this year as a representative selection, the answer is brief: not much.

This rejection (through fear) of the artist is sadly characterised by the case of Luis Bunuel, whose latest film *Cela s'appelle l'Aurore* had been chosen by the French selection committee to head their official entry. This story of a man driven by injustice to murder, and of the efforts of decent people to help him, makes a forceful, uncompromising stand for personal loyalties, for generosity and human understanding. The "authorities" saw it, however, and took objection to its "anarchistic tendencies". As a result it had to be withdrawn, in favour of Delannoy's *Marie Antoinette*, a wretched, spineless picture with aristocrats like plaster saints and every revolutionary a corrupt brute. Nor was there much compensating warmth of emotion to be found in the French documentaries—*Le Monde du Silence* (discussed elsewhere in this issue), Clouzot's remarkable, but melodramatic, *Le Mystère Picasso*, and *Le Ballon Rouge*, a new fantasy by Albert Lamorisse, the director of *Crin Blanc*. This last picture was hailed by the French (who are never



Practice session in the bull-ring.

The end of a bullfight.

Toro





Rejection: Luis Bunuel's "*Cela s'appelle l'Aurore*", which was taken out of the official French entry at Cannes.

slow to salute their own successes) as the "revelation of the festival". Less partial observers found it a cold triumph of technical virtuosity: a work of fancy rather than imagination.

A far healthier impression was given by the Italian selection. Apart from *Il Tetto*, there were two other realist features of likeable quality: *Il Ferroviere*, Pietro Germi's story of a railwayman and his family, and *Gli Innamorati* (*The Lovers*), a spirited colloquial comedy of ordinary young people by a new director, Mauro Bolognini. Germi's picture is a little sentimental, and Bolognini's a frank *divertissement*, but both have an air of being in touch with at least the superficial realities of contemporary life, and do it with that spontaneity, good humour and implicit humanity that is the Italians' especial gift to the cinema.

It was America's offering that struck the really depressing note. Pseudo-realism, corrupt emotionalism, and a specious pretence to be tackling important social issues—these are the common attributes of pictures like *The Harder They Fall* and *I'll Cry Tomorrow*. *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, a vulgar and debilitated remake by Hitchcock of his splendid old Gaumont-British melodrama, demonstrates once again the pernicious effect of the Hollywood system on a once brilliant entertainer; and *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*, a nauseating and overblown exercise in best-seller sociology, represents the dead hand of CinemaScope at its most chilling. With its artists in exile, or victims of a system which grows all the time more rigidly commercial, Hollywood is now, artistically as well as socially, a dangerously reactionary force.

V

"Of course", said the Hungarian director, "we have our difficulties too. But I have the impression that they are less crippling than yours". And indeed one of the most cheering events at Cannes was the showing of Zoltan Fabri's *Merry-go-round*, and of a second Hungarian picture, *Discord*, presented out of festival. For these two films reveal not merely exceptional individual talents, but the enviable spectacle of a young national cinema alive with the highest creative promise.

Four or five years ago Hungarian films were invariably tendentious in their treatment of contemporary subjects, and stereotyped in their portrayal of human beings. Their charm was on the simple level of operetta. The films shown this

year suggest a rapid and significant development towards a far more comprehensive outlook, a deeper and more serious representation of life. In both pictures the theme of social conflict is important, yet both rise above what is narrow and specific in their situations, and speak all the more powerfully as a result. *Discord*, directed by Laszlo Ranody, is a dry title for a rich and moving film. It starts in 1937, with the return of a young man to his native village, to be the new schoolteacher. He finds the district divided: on one side an impoverished and exploited peasantry, and on the other the opportunist landlord. There is nothing essentially new in the story: the film's richness is in the honest warmth of its sentiment, the directness and sincerity of its playing, its feeling for a people and their land. On neither side are the characters subordinated to the ideas: there is a real progression in the teacher's slow change from a woolly, benevolent sentimentalism to a sad acceptance of the fundamental nature of the conflict. This film has, in fact, more than a touch of the humanity and faith that Donskoi expressed in his Gorki trilogy.

Discord is a full, a spacious picture: *Merry-go-round* is concentrated, lyrical. Again, the story is simple, the love-story of two young peasants, he independent and forward-looking, she constrained by the narrow traditionalism of her inflexible old father. Imre Sarkady, the writer, knows his peasants, their hard hands and hard heads, their obstinate devotion to the old ways: he gives to each his dignity. The father is no monster, but a man of pride and principle; the boy, who understands the new ideals, still has the firm intransigence of his race; and the girl, so sweet and submissive, turns out to have an angry spirit of her own. Most remarkable is the style which Fabri has brought to the direction of the film—one of extreme finesse, sophisticated in its subtleties of angle and rhythm, sensitive in its emotional shading as it is delicate in its photographic tones. (He has got from his cameraman a soft, diffused lighting, particularly refreshing in these days when a hard, unvarying clarity of focus seems to be regarded as the cardinal virtue in a lighting style.)

Above all, Fabri uses the cinema poetically, revealing deep, compelling emotions in a turn of the head, or in the grey image of a forlorn landscape. His montage is in a sense intellectual, but of the kind that stirs and excites: as the girl and boy ride together on the swings and carousels of the village fair, the images cut brilliantly, now in big, expressive close-up (in movement all the time), now whirling and dancing to the waltz of the hurdy-gurdy, the girl thrilled, frightened, exhilarated, giving herself to gaiety and rapture,



Replacement: Michèle Morgan in Jean Delannoy's "*Marie Antoinette*".



"Merry-go-round".

the camera swinging hectically round and round. *Merry-go-round* is memorable, though, for more than its sequences of bravura: its relationships throughout are finely conceived, and presented with a subtlety that entirely convinces. When the boy and girl come together at last, through their own courage and will to live, the effect is not of a propagandist triumph but of a real victory for human understanding, for the pursuit of happiness.

VI

Many other films were shown at Cannes, and I am left with no space to write about them properly. But what anyway is the use of a list of titles, attached to names most readers will never have heard of, of films which probably they will never have a chance to see? For we are back with our gasometers: last week *The Harder They Fall*, next week *I'll Cry Tomorrow* and coming shortly *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*. And so we broaden our horizons and bring culture to the people.

Will *Pather Panchali* ever be shown in Leeds? When will the people of Glasgow have a chance to see *Merry-go-round*? Michael Cacoyannis has made an excellent new film in Greece, *The Girl in Black* (photographed by our own Walter Lassally); but you have not yet been able to see *Stella*,

which he presented at Cannes last year, and to appreciate for yourselves his vivid, fast-developing talent. Barbachano Ponce, the Mexican producer whose *Raíces* was acclaimed at Venice in 1954 and at Cannes in 1955 (but not yet shown in this country) brought his new film, *Toro*, to Cannes—the fascinating study of a bullfighter, a real documentary, which studies not merely appearances and techniques, but states of mind, the pride, the fear, the dedication of these sacrificial heroes of the arena. Whatever your instinctive reaction to the idea of bullfighting, I do not think you could fail to find *Toro* of the deepest human interest: but even if the censor were to let it into the country, I do not suppose that anyone would show it to you. You ought, too, to see those Russian and Italian CinemaScope shorts; and that fascinating picture of a Japanese murder trial, with its horrifying scenes of police corruption and brutality; and many people would surely enjoy the Czechs' fine version of the Smetana opera, *Dalibor*.

On the creative side, too, there are even graver questions which more and more insistently demand an answer. Films like *Merry-go-round* and *Discord* (to say nothing of Russian and Chinese and Polish production) present a challenge to what is often called the Free World—a peaceful challenge, which calls for a reply not so much to them, as to ourselves. How long must we continue to be unable to meet it?



"Farewell, My Lovely": Dick Powell and Esther Howard.

THE PRIVATE EYE

by Penelope Houston

IN American pulp fiction, and in the shadowy B-picture world that is its screen equivalent, the private detective is always with us. The bottle of whisky in the office filing cabinet, the gun concealed behind the car dashboard, remain the particular tools of his trade; he moves in an atmosphere of jaded violence, in which the police chief takes his orders from a crime syndicate, lawyers double-cross their own clients, racketeers control cities, and the innocently alluring blonde is revealed in the final reel as a triple murderess.

Employing these same shabby fantasies, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler proved that the private detective could serve as hero for a novel as well as for a thriller. Chandler, in particular, gave the thriller a perverse kind of social significance. Writing of "the cold, half-lit world where always the wrong thing happens and never the right",

he measured its decadence against the incorruptible determination that led his detective, Philip Marlowe, always to seek out the truth. A disenchanted crusader in the cause of truth, a man honest at least with himself, Marlowe is considerably more of a moralist than the screen adaptations of Chandler's novels were prepared to admit. The cinema used his stories mainly for their action, their hard cutting edge, their concentrated atmosphere of violence, sex and corruption. But the screen cycle that began with *The Maltese Falcon* and included four adaptations from Chandler quickly ran itself out in violence and unmotivated brutality. The smell of corruption, never absent from these stories, became overpoweringly strong. Now the private detective has been relegated again to the B-picture; and the Mickey Spillane adaptations, melodramas like *Kiss Me Deadly* and *I, the Jury*, are so casually and savagely decadent as to mark the end of the road. After this, there is only the mocking parody of the "Girl Hunt" ballet in *Bandwagon*.

The world that Chandler created in his novels, and that the screen versions to some extent duplicated, is essentially urban. Violence spreads through the back streets and the city tenements; outside the detective's office, the faulty neon sign flashes sadly off and on; in the broad suburban streets are the vast and quietly sinister houses of the rich and the dubious private clinics operated by shady psychoanalysts. There is an insistent melancholy in Chandler's writing, in the quality of his response to the harsh, unfinished neon-lit towns of the Pacific seaboard, the raffish setting and its derelict inhabitants, that the films generally failed to communicate. Marlowe himself became on the screen a character less reflective, less oppressed by his world, and the corrosive bitterness went out of the stories. But the films remain watchable precisely as the novels are readable: they are all exercises in sophisticated violence, stories in which formal problems of detection count for very little, and in which the more vicious forms of corruption are presented so objectively that the oblique social comment may easily be interpreted merely as a cynical gesture of despair.

That Chandler is himself something of a romantic, his defence of the private detective as hero sufficiently proves: "... Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man". This element of overt romanticism, combined with an uncommonly sharp sense of the contemporary idiom, gives his novels their distinctive character. His style, so obviously "cinematic" that the screen versions had often only to realise the sharply defined setting, take over the hard, slangy dialogue, is at the same time ostentatiously mannered.

Farewell, My Lovely (the book had been filmed previously, as an undistinguished entry in the "Falcon" series) was the screen adaptation that came closest to the author's particular tone. Directed by Edward Dmytryk and scripted by John Paxton, this highly charged thriller had more conscious style, more visual atmosphere, than any of its successors. *The Big Sleep*, in which Humphrey Bogart played Marlowe and Lauren Bacall the spoilt, insolent rich girl trying to protect her family from blackmail, was harder, faster, more laconically tough and more cold-blooded in its humour. Rather less enjoyable were *The High Window* (director: John Brahm), a thriller which never quite sustained the promise of its uneasily tense opening scenes, and *The Lady in the Lake* (director: Robert Montgomery), the first and only film consistently to employ the subjective camera technique. The disadvantage of this "stunt" method was that it drastically slowed down the pace of the action; and it is a prerequisite of the Chandler films that the audience should be given no time for reflection.

Already, these pictures seem enclosed in their period. Their atmosphere of violence and stylised disenchantment

belonged to the war and immediately post-war years; their moral values, in so far as the films retained any, were those of a defiant individualist trying to keep his sense of balance in a disintegrating society. And the hard, fast atmospheric thriller with its whip-crack dialogue and its harsh urban poetry is a type of film that CinemaScope has virtually killed. Essentially, Chandler wrote for the black and white screen, the commercial cinema of ten years or so ago with its high gloss, its relentless efficiency and its accurate sense of the city scene.

How far the films had satisfied the novelist himself, however, still remained an intriguing question, and it was mainly with the idea of discovering the answer that I telephoned Raymond Chandler to arrange an interview. The scene for it had the curious quality of seeming incongruous and yet at the same time not inappropriate: a furnished flat in one of those quietly decaying streets somewhere north and west of Lords where London begins imperceptibly to shade off into suburbia. This is our own urban scene at its most characteristic, and Raymond Chandler, it appears, finds London a congenial background.

Inevitably, the conversation veered between Hollywood, his own novels and crime fiction in general—to Raymond Chandler, though, “crime fiction” is a slightly meaningless term, and the distinction between straight novel and thriller is a somewhat exasperating case of traditional literary snobbery. (One remembers his attack on the jigsaw puzzle conventions of the English detective novel, his assertion that Dashiell Hammett “gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not with handwrought duelling pistols, curare and tropical fish.”)

Writing for the cinema, Chandler said, had done his own technique as a novelist no good: “I kept finding that I had to scrap dialogue because I’d written it as though an actor were going to speak it”. And in fact the screenwriter’s function, as he sees it, is to reduce dialogue to an essential minimum. All the adaptations of his own novels, he said, had relied too heavily on talk; all of them had been to some extent unsatisfactory. Notably, none of the actors who played Marlowe on the screen had conveyed the essence of the character, his quality of moral awareness. Dick Powell, who played the part in *Farewell, My Lovely*, came closest to Chandler’s own conception of Marlowe (“Bogart was too much like Bogart”), and the film itself he regarded as the most successful. Of *The Big Sleep*, whose plot in the screen version seemed almost impenetrably obscure, he said, “half the time you couldn’t even understand what was supposed to be happening”. The screenwriters (who included William Faulkner) hadn’t, it appeared, always been too certain themselves, and while the film was in production the studio telephoned Chandler to check on whether one character (the chauffeur) had in fact been murdered or had killed himself. Howard Hawks, director of *The Big Sleep*, remains however the director whose approach to his novels Chandler finds most sympathetic.

Although the film versions of his novels were produced at the time that Chandler was working in Hollywood, it is characteristic of the Hollywood method that he was not himself employed on them. He drafted, he told me, a treatment for the script of *The Lady in the Lake*, but the result left both Chandler and the studio dissatisfied and another writer took over. Meanwhile, his own screen writing involved him in several more or less routine jobs (including a picture called *And Now Tomorrow*, in which a deaf Loretta Young was operated on and cured by Alan Ladd), and in two films more characteristic and distinctive. Of his collaboration with Billy Wilder on the script of *Double Indemnity*, Chandler

said that he in fact wrote much of the dialogue. Wilder, an exacting critic with an instinct for the right phrase, would walk about the room rejecting lines of dialogue as they were read out to him, until Chandler contrived a sentence that satisfied both of them. “He was”, Chandler says, “always right”.

The classically taut and incisive script of *Double Indemnity* undoubtedly represents Chandler’s best Hollywood work, although there are scenes in *Strangers on a Train* (the first manoeuvring for position when the killer encounters his victim, the visit to the murderer’s formidably eccentric mother) that seem wholly characteristic of Chandler’s edged style. It was not entirely surprising, however, to hear that Chandler and Hitchcock had approached the problems of thriller construction from somewhat different angles. Hitchcock, Chandler told me, was anxious to film a particular scene on the roof of a high building in Washington, and the script had to be adjusted to bring the characters to this rather unlikely place. (Plans were later changed when permission to shoot on the roof-top could not be obtained.) It was Hitchcock also who demanded the grandiose fair-ground climax. On the whole, Chandler felt that the basic problem presented by the *Strangers on a Train* script—a reversal of the original novel’s situation, which hinged on the assumption that one man could drive another to commit murder—had not been logically solved, and that the picture was to some extent a confidence trick.

This was his last screenwriting assignment, and his attitude to Hollywood seemed to reflect the novelist’s characteristic mistrust. He had, he said with a certain belligerent pride, once been suspended for four months by his studio—a disciplinary action directed more frequently against actors than against writers, and a kind of honourable wound stripe in a writer’s Hollywood service. One had the impression that he looked on his Hollywood career as a series of hard-fought campaigns in which the writer’s main weapon was a

(Continued on page 55)



“The Big Sleep”: Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart.



The last days of war: a scene from "08/15 in der Heimat", the third film in the "08/15" trilogy.

THE GERMAN WASTE LAND

by Enno Patalas

THE artistic failure of German films since the second world war is self-evident. The reasons for this failure, however, remain somewhat mysterious*. To begin with, why should the vaunted miracle of German economic recovery have been accompanied, in this case, by imaginative bankruptcy? Most people in Germany attribute this to the problems of defeat, notably to the dismemberment of major production companies demanded by the Allies after the war. Unlike the Soviets, who founded the DEFA company in their zone as a monopolistic successor to UFA, and also centralised distribution and exhibition, the Western Powers, after decreeing a separate sale of the UFA production, distribution and laboratory plants, licensed more than 150 new companies and a great number of distributors. Any amalgamation was made impossible in advance. The inevitable result was an absence of stability and certainty—something that has characterised almost every enterprise in postwar West Germany.

* This article is solely concerned with the West German cinema. Since 1948, film-making in Western and Eastern Germany has followed different paths, and the Soviet system in Eastern Germany has led to very different results.

After the West German currency reform in 1948 (a turning point also in the development of German film production), an acute shortage of capital obliged production companies to depend heavily on distributors and on other sponsors not directly concerned with film-making. The Bund (Federal Government) and the separate states are now supporting the film industry by guaranteeing deficits, but their encouragement of production is from a narrowly commercial standpoint. And as a result, every attempt to break away from the old reach-me-down UFA formulas has been unsuccessful.

These economic factors, together with the loss of the Berlin-Babelsberg studios and of the export market, account for the general fear of experiment, a reluctance to take imaginative risks or to employ new talent. But film-makers in other countries have, after all, had similar obstacles to contend with. One might find in these economic problems a reason for a shortage of product—which is not in fact the case, since in 1954 Germany made 108 films and took fifth place in world film production. One would not expect to find in economics an explanation for the inferior quality of the German product. Moreover, the few attempts at a new social attitude, a new artistic style, began in those immediate postwar years when Helmut Kautner produced *In jenen*

Tagen (In Those Days) literally out of nothing.

Nor do the general complaints about a lack of talent in directors, writers, actors, and technicians go to the root of the matter. A number of films have shown distinct ability in screen-writing and camerawork; players such as Oskar Werner, Hildegard Knef, O. E. Hasse and Cornell Borchers have given excellent performances in foreign films and even in bad German ones. The real causes of failure require a deeper analysis.

II

Contemporary German films are illustrating not "life as it is" (whatever that may be), but a reflection of reality broken up in the prism of collective wishes and projections of anxiety. Siegfried Kracauer in *From Caligari to Hitler* more precisely defined this function of the cinema, and found that it is less the conscious convictions than the psychological dispositions, the deep, concealed layers of collective temperament, that find their reflection in the popular films of a particular country at a particular time. When the German postwar cinema is viewed in this light, in the context of the present situation, the background to its failure becomes more apparent.

"Nur nicht denken—sich verschenken!" ("Never think—just surrender") sang Hildegard Knef some years ago in a film symptomatically titled *Illusion in Moll (Illusion in a Minor Key)*. In doing so, she expressed neatly enough the attitude of the postwar German screen. The elevation of weakness, passivity, resignation, typifies the "serious" German films of these years. To an objective spectator, the most obvious qualities in such pictures as *Meines Vaters Pferde (My Father's Horses)*, *Regina Amstetten, Eine Liebesgeschichte (Love Story)* or *Geliebtes Leben (Beloved Life)*, will be the lack of inner tensions, the weak characterisation, the absence of any inner dynamic force. He will be struck by their heavy sentimentalism, their conventionally lyrical interludes and tamely contrived plots.

The formula allows little room for positive action, for the display of reason or passion. These films are full of a vague and hazy emotionalism, the kind of emotion that is meant to "come over you", undermining the will and the intellect. People tend to become little more than passive objects; it is fate, in the guise of social conventions or of pure chance, that ultimately dominates everything. Intelligence and initiative seem suspect in the German cinema, and only the rogue is allowed to display cleverness or common sense. The "positive" hero has to be carried away by his "beautiful" feelings, by the "stirring of his blood", by his "unerring instincts". Faced with problems that demand evidence of will and character, he fails—but the failure is inevitably presented in the light of a beautiful "sacrifice".

This passive and quietist attitude is reflected also in the images and the dialogue. Stories unfold through fixed, static shots, stylised towards "beauty" and composed in primitive picture-book style; actors move like the puppets they represent; settings and costumes, often elaborated with emphatic care, remain external, unrelated. Landscape and animal scenes are recorded with painstaking accuracy—a permanent characteristic of the German cinema—as are military displays, which fulfil a function almost equivalent to that of the musical numbers in American films. All this is symptomatic: pleasure in idyllic natural beauty, in the mechanical rhythms of a parade, is also a form of surrender.

III

Regardless of changing commercial considerations, the basic mood of German film production has remained constant over the last few years. Both the macabre pessimism of the

so-called *Trummerfilme* (the "ruin" film, set in bombed Berlin and other cities) and the threadbare optimism of more recent pictures reflect the same thing: a desire for rest, for release, for freedom from responsibility. Before the currency reform of 1948, at a time when reality itself seemed to offer no means of escape from misery and depression, screen-writers sought a solution by transfiguring death and suicide, by glorifying prostitution.* The lachrymose self-pity of Willi Forst's *Die Sunderin (The Sinner)* was an outstanding example. The heroine (Hildegard Knef) prostituted herself to finance an operation for her lover, suffering from an incurable illness. The operation failed, and the lovers, in a grimly picturesque denouement, committed suicide by putting veronal in their champagne. *Der Kaplan von San Lorenzo*, starring Dieter Borsche, the popular favourite of the moment, and *Illusion in Moll* were films with similar motivations.

The next screen cycle can be summed up in its titles—*Grün ist die Heide (Green is the Heath)*, *Rosen blühen auf dem Heidegrab (Roses Blooming on the Heath Grave)*—opening lines of a folksong), *Wenn die Abendglocken lauten (When the Evening Bells are Tolling)*, *Tausend rote Rosen blühen (A Thousand Red Roses Blooming)*, and so on. These films glorified country and provincial life, where all was apparently peaceful and free from tension. So did countless *Heimatfilme* ("homeland" films), in which the city was represented as evil incarnate, the scene of temptation, vice and discord, in contrast to the serenely contented countryside.

In the meantime, with the return of economic security, a no less superficial optimism succeeded pessimism. The prevailing mood, however, remained passive and fatalistic. Life—especially life within society—continued to be represented less as a challenge to be met than as a fate to be accepted. The illusion of a secure and sheltered world, in the face of its opposite, has become the pipe-dream of a people surrendering their own powers of decision.

In this climate of opinion, it is scarcely surprising that social problems should be evaded or, at most, presented as themselves the inevitable consequences of "Fate". In

* The situation of the West German film in 1948 was largely analogous to that of 1924. In both cases, a return to economic stability ended a period of relative artistic independence; and Kracauer's comment that the decline of the German film in the second half of the 'twenties was "nothing but the result of a widespread inner paralysis" applies to recent developments as well.



"Lachrymose self-pity . . ." Hildegard Knef and Gustav Fröhlich in "Die Sunderin".



Nazi: in "The Last Act" Oskar Werner plays a young stormtrooper captain whose devotion to the regime is shaken only in the final days of the war.

Geliebtes Leben, a German noblewoman experiences manifold adversities during the first half of this century as a result of political events; but each happening is used merely to highlight the heroine's steadfastness and moral integrity, qualities which ultimately overcome all obstacles. There is no attempt to analyse political realities, to consider the causes of the misfortunes that overtake her.

The wish-fulfilment image underlying this film (and many others), is that of the non-political man in the street, who claims his right to a kind of totalitarian private life in order to evade political and social decisions. He considers such decisions not only troublesome but superfluous. He believes that his decision cannot, in any case, influence circumstances, and he hopes that somehow everything will eventually turn out all right—if only he can keep his own hands clean or, as they say a dozen times in *Geliebtes Leben*, "keep straight".

History has always demonstrated the dangers attending such a non-political attitude. When social and economic foundations collapse, the non-political individual is only too likely to resign his autonomy and submit himself blindly to authority. And many recent German films reveal precisely these tendencies. *Sauerbruch*, the study of a physician with almost superhuman abilities, is a good example: the hero is a paragon of surgeons, making correct diagnoses with the unerring assurance of a sleepwalker—often in the face of contrary scientific evidence—and turning all sorrow into joy when a patient commits himself unreservedly into his hands. The political implications of this subjection to authority become plain in *Der Letzte Sommer* (*The Last Summer*), directed by Harald Braun. In this story of a wise and kindly ruler who, through the example of his virtue, converts a young rebel into a respectful subject, the fact that right is on the side of government and authority is never questioned. The rebel places himself in the wrong from the outset by his attitude of revolt.

IV

In 1954 there was a development which at first seemed encouraging. The war, Nazism, the resistance, themes hitherto tabu, became popular subjects. The most successful film of that year, *08/15* (director: Paul May) seemed outwardly to challenge the *Wehrmacht* values, the sanctity of

the military uniform, with a plot somewhat on the lines of *From Here to Eternity*. In 1939, on the eve of war, Lance Corporal Asch is ground into the mill of the barrack square, suffering the injustice of superiors and the indifference of equals. But, unlike Prewitt, he allows himself to be absorbed into the system of force, making an ambitious switch from the ruled to the ruling side. He is promoted and becomes a success; and a film that begins as a criticism of militarism ends up as a celebration. The success of *08/15* has brought with it a revival in popularity for the military comedy, with the harsh reality of war itself being turned into a subject for knockabout farce. But *Der Hauptmann und sein Held* (*The Captain and his Hero*) directed by Max Nosseck, the most serious and positive among films of this type, was not popular. Interestingly, it developed its satire on service bureaucracy through the character of a wholly unsoldierly intellectual, the precise opposite of the opportunist Corporal Asch.

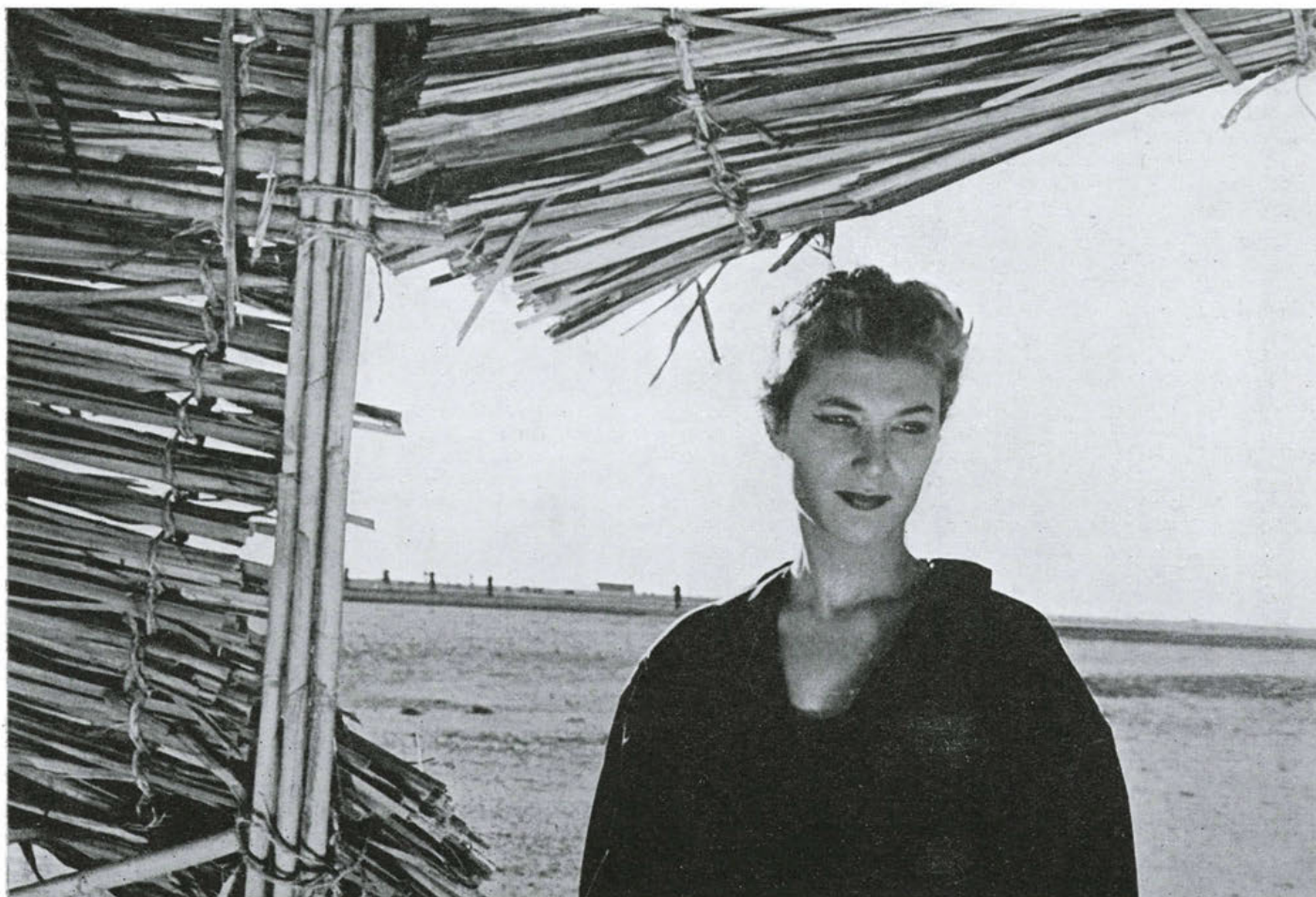
Several recent films have dealt with the resistance to Nazism, but in pictures as varied in style as *Canaris* (director: Alfred Weidenmann), *Der Teufels General* (director: Helmut Kautner), *Kinder, Mutter und ein General* (director: Laslo Benedek), and G. W. Pabst's *Der Letzte Akt*, the effect is less that of a direct evocation of the disasters of war than of their interpretation through the prevailing mood of consciousness. So an embarrassing blank in historical memory, the reason for various neurotic traits in postwar German society, is discreetly filled up.

It is interesting that all these films emphasise the "positive" aspects of the situation: nobility and honesty assert themselves against the external circumstances of war and Nazism, but there is no consideration of the absolute negation that war symbolises. And it seems significant that an ordinary citizen is never permitted to take the leading part in these resistance films. Superiors (authority) take the centre of the stage, and the audience knows why—it feels itself exonerated. The emphasis on indecision, on people whose anti-Nazism becomes overt only when the war is evidently lost, confirms a general feeling that it was impossible until too late to know which way things were going.

It was an American film about Rommel, *Desert Fox*, that began this movement to minimise war and Nazism and to criticise only the folly of continuing a war already lost—not the folly of starting it. *Canaris* stayed carefully within these limits, and Kautner's version of Carl Zuckmayer's play *The Devil's General* insistently evades the whole question of the necessity and justice of underground resistance to Nazism. *Der 20. Juli*, directed by Falck Harnack, misleadingly suggests that the anti-Hitler movement was motivated simply by a desire to bring the war more rapidly to an end, while Pabst, in both *The Last Act* and *It Happened on July 20th*, is inclined to use Nazism for purposes of cheap melodrama. Even Benedek's *Children, Mothers and a General*, the most serious



Anti-Nazi: Curt Jurgens as the air force general who outspokenly opposes Hitlerism in "The Devil's General".



"Nicht Mehr Fliehen".

and interesting of this group of films, benevolently evades all political implications in its account of the agony of the last weeks of war.

Finally, one can note in West German film production a tendency towards scarcely disguised expressions of admiration for Nazism. Authoritarian sentiments, not lacking in the films of the last seven years, are perhaps finding more overt expression. A film such as *Der Major und die Stiere* (*The Major and the Steers*), for instance, implies its denigration of those democrats who, in 1945, were the first to attempt to rebuild German political authority. Another of last year's productions, *Solange du Lebst* (*As Long as You Live*; director, Harald Reinl), concerns the Condor Legion, the troops sent by Hitler to serve in the Spanish Civil War, who contributed to the overthrow of the Republic and at the same time tried out the German military weapons.

V

All these films presumably reflect a subconscious mood in Western Germany, and they appear to satisfy the public taste. In present circumstances, though, the activities of a few non-conformist young film-makers seem particularly worthy of attention. Herbert Seggelke in Munich and Harold Senft in Wiesbaden have been experimenting in the field of abstraction—a tradition always to be relied on in Germany. A group of Munich students have endeavoured, in *In Jedem Land zu dieser Zeit* (*In any Country at the Present*

Time), to symbolise essential problems of artistic creation. These experiments are too enclosed in the dated *avant-garde* conventions of the 'twenties, but at least they are genuine and sincere.

A 24-year-old Viennese director, Herbert Vesely, has developed a more individual style. Some years ago he came to Germany with a 16 mm. film, *An diesen Abenden* (*On These Evenings*), an attempt to interpret in semi-abstract images a poem by Georg Trakl. Since then he has had the chance to make a full-length film, and in *Nicht Mehr Fliehen* (*Fly no Longer*), premiered at the Berlin Festival in 1955, created an authentic *avant-garde* work. This is a film of surprising power, with choreographed movement, a suggestive use of images and sound, and a twelve-tone score by the 23-year-old composer Gerhard Ruhl. Its theme is the awareness of *absurdity*—in the sense that Camus has conveyed it in literature: the crucial situation of human beings confronted with the atomic bomb. But it is not in the least literary. Its structure is nearest to a lyric poem in its lack of "logical" development and narrative. In view of the current level of commercial interests, the general moral indifference and lack of initiative, an experiment like this acquires special importance, for it has a watchful conscience and an awareness of the dangers of complacency. It is in such a film, rather than in the stale atmosphere of the Berlin-Tempelhof or Munich-Geiseltal studios, that one can see hope for a revival of the true German cinema.



Soviet



Donskoi

Mark Donskoi's new version of the Maxim Gorky novel *Mother* "was conceived and produced", according to its director, "as a screen epic about great-hearted people". Above: Donskoi with his actors; left, Vera Maretskaya (the mother) and Alexei Batalov (Pavel). Batalov is a nephew of the actor who played Pavel in Pudovkin's *Mother*.



film makers

Youtkevich

Sergei Youtkevich's *Othello*, which was awarded the prize for direction at the Cannes Festival, opened the recent season of Soviet films at the National Film Theatre. Above: Youtkevich rehearsing with Sergei Bondarchuk (*Othello*) and Irina Skobtseva (*Desdemona*). Right: *Othello* and *Desdemona* leave the Venetian Senate; behind them is Iago (A. Popov).



Film Reviews

OTHELLO

SERGEI YOUTKEVICH has defined his interpretation of Othello's tragedy not primarily as one of love and jealousy but of misplaced trust. Othello's murderous act is committed in defence of truth and justice, out of the violation of his faith in man's noble and harmonious destiny. For many years Youtkevich has cherished his dream of bringing *Othello* to the screen (*Cinéma 56* recently published an article on his conception written by the director as early as 1938), and now the final result, meaningful and mature, carries the weight of a subject profoundly felt and understood.

The first quality that strikes one in the film is the authority and confident ease with which it takes to the open air. Here is no calculated transference of a stage classic to the screen, but a total reconsideration of the subject from first to last in terms of cinema.

Othello himself is first seen through the eyes of Desdemona. She spins an ornamental globe dreamily, and the scene fades. We see Othello, hero of the countless exploits which have fired her romantic imagination—the valiant warrior, the shipwrecked galley slave, the natural candidate for the highest honour and renown. The dream fades . . . into the credit titles. (Welles' pre-credits action was the funeral cortege; "He began with death, I began with life", Youtkevich is reported impartially to have observed at Cannes.) We next see Othello in his time of full contentment. His noble conception of life has proved an attainable ideal. To Desdemona he is the tenderest of lovers, and in the Senate he speaks from a deep, certain and rapturous self-fulfilment. After the marriage (it is Cassio who guides the swift and secret gondola along the night canal), when Brabantio strides, dismayed and angry, from the Senate, it is almost as an after-thought that he turns to hurl back his warning: "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see; she has deceived her father, and may thee". As Othello and Desdemona move down the wide, sunlit steps to the square below, Desdemona drops her handkerchief. Iago, hovering and alert, darts forward to retrieve it and thereby to earn his first "honest Iago". A masterly ironic stroke, and a brilliantly casual strengthening of the incidents to come.

Passions, both secret and open, bind the central characters together and inform their every action. A provocative and sexually eager Emilia buys Iago's kisses rather than his good-humour with the purloined handkerchief. Her arm twists across the screen as she coquettishly teases her husband with the handkerchief; later, Othello's hand will be seen in an arresting close-up as he desperately demands the handkerchief from Desdemona. And in the final scene the same handkerchief is raised to Cassio's lips. Was Desdemona urged to plead for him by an almost unconscious awareness of his love for her? Did some psychic recognition of this in Othello render Iago's work that much the easier? By such hints and speculations the knot of central passions is slowly tightened, and by such subtle preparation as this early planting of the handkerchief coincidence is elevated to a disturbing and dramatic fatalism. Not even the willow song is avoided, despite the threat it can clearly present to realism on the screen. Youtkevich has already shown us a Desdemona who loves to sing, and the first seeds of suspicion are sown to the sound of her singing as her boat drifts across the bay. Later, when her happiness is already overshadowed, she is still heard singing sadly.

The first scene of treachery is a typical example of Youtkevich's invention. A conception that, given a less than impeccable feeling for the total shape of the action, might have defied control or remained merely bleakly abstract, here amplifies the scene with a striking dramatic symbolism. As the two men walk along the beach (the same scene in Welles' film was also shot on the move), and Iago's hints assume their meaning for Othello, they pass through a tangle of fishing nets. The nets hang more densely, Othello's perturbation mounts, and physical and mental claustrophobia

commingle. In their next scene together, the seeds have taken root; the treachery is already a complex growth, and a note of fearful intimacy is struck. Convinced finally of Desdemona's guilt, Othello sinks to his knees on the shore, oblivious of the waves dashing against him. Iago kneels beside him; and as Othello's head sinks on his breast, there is something of a lover's ecstasy in Iago's thrill of possessive triumph:

Othello: "Now art thou my lieutenant".

Iago: "I am your own forever".

There are interesting uses of soliloquy throughout *Othello*. The key speech, "O now, for ever . . . Farewell the tranquil mind" is extracted from the scene with Iago and treated as a soliloquy. Othello walks through the camp at night, speaking his distracted thoughts aloud, unaware of the amazed concern of his men. On the occasion of Othello's arrival in Cyprus, Iago is seen in close-up, backed by the festive fireworks. His thoughts are heard on the sound track but his lips (as in Olivier's *Henry V*) remain motionless. Later, Iago addresses another soliloquy to his reflection mirrored in a well. This captures effectively the quality of dramatic dialectic inherent in soliloquy, its essential function as an inner dialogue between brain and spirit. Othello also addresses his own reflection in the same pool, but here the need is for an assuagement of his torment, a desperate attempt to rediscover a remembered peace in the mirrored face.

I have already mentioned Youtkevich's remarkable visual sense. Sovcolour, in its latest development of the Agfa process, serves this with beautiful subtlety. Much of the action takes place out of doors, but the passions lose none of their intensity when exposed to the bright sunlight and backed by the blue sea. Iago is seen alone in foreground shadow while Othello is teased by a skittish Desdemona under clustering sundrenched vines; Othello reels in his first onrush of anguish against a burning white wall. It is only towards the end that the clouds gather, the candles are lighted, and the drama darkens to climax. Here Sergei Bondarchuk rises finely to the tragedy's demands, presenting a naturally noble spirit fearfully wracked in its battle against baffling and malignant odds. After the murder, particular mention should be given to A. Maximova's Emilia. Her horrified inability to grasp the enormity of her husband's offence is a powerful and true interpretation of a challenging scene. A. Popov's Iago is a plausible villain, generally withdrawn and watchful, but enough of the extrovert to sing a lusty soldier's song at a celebration. Competent enough to serve the director's main intention, this is not, though, a performance that attains any great subtlety.

Youtkevich has defined the tragedy's climax as follows:

"I believe that after the murder of Desdemona the Moor remains calm. The tragedy only attains its climax at the moment when Emilia reveals her husband's lie. . . . The treachery of 'honest Iago' is what finally plunges Othello into chaos. Iago is calm; he has lost the game, but as long as Othello lives he is the victor. When Othello raises his dagger, it is Iago who leaps forward to stop him, having understood his intention. Othello's death negates the victory of Iago. The Moor pays for his crime with blood. His courage and his honesty elevate him above Iago. The final wave of Iago's envy breaks forth: he has lost the last round."

The moral implications which Youtkevich discovers in the work make his Othello an authentically tragic hero; his collapse is a disintegration from the highest spiritual refinement. And in the final scenes Othello's calm re-assumption of his lost nobility—his withdrawal from earthly chaos—lends the tragedy a deeply moving dying fall. An elevating and intensely satisfying exposition of the play, this Russian *Othello* must rank with the best of filmed Shakespeare.

DEREK PROUSE.

A HITCHCOCK DOUBLE

AN autumn morning in the New England countryside; a small boy, armed with a toy gun, stumbling through a red-and-gold landscape; a rifle shot cracking into the stillness—Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry* (Paramount) opens with a characteristic flourish, an incisive transition from tranquillity to violence. Here, though, the start of violence is merely an introduction to Harry Worp, already lying dead in the woods, and the still centre of this sardonic comedy. Around him, as he is buried, exhumed and re-interred during the course of the day, gyrate characters variously involved in his death: a retired tugboat captain, a gallantly ageing



"The Trouble with Harry". Above, Jerry Mathers and Shirley MacLaine; below, Mildred Natwick and Edmund Gwenn.

spinster, Harry's imperturbable young widow and the artist who falls in love with her. Rational eccentrics, their casual disregard for death has its origins in their bustling concern with life. Unlike *The Ladykillers*, which broke wholly with reality, or Bunuel's *Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz*, with its ambiguous terrors, *The Trouble with Harry* establishes a setting neither entirely fantastical nor disturbingly close to the real. Assimilating the black humours of the *comédie noire* into the gentler comedy of village eccentricity, Hitchcock and his scriptwriter, John Michael Hayes, have concocted an entertainment insidious in its charm.

Relaxed and deliberate, *The Trouble with Harry* spins out its single joke—the calm acceptance of the fact of violence that is the basis of *comédie noire*—with an alert regard for the possibilities of a situation. The tugboat captain (Edmund Gwenn), believing that he has killed Harry with a bullet meant for a rabbit, sets about concealing the corpse; the prim Miss Graveley (Mildred Natwick), coming upon this scene, shows herself coolly unconcerned with its implications and invites the captain to tea and blueberry muffins. The artist sits down to make a sketch of the corpse; the village doctor, wandering through the woods reciting poetry to himself, ignores it altogether. Although the corpse is kept persistently in the foreground, the film blandly skirts the macabre. Harry exists merely as an inapposite feature in an idyllic pastoral scene. Quietly concentrated, the film's humour is largely a matter of a balance precariously sustained: the blazing splendour of the landscape sets off the grim little joke of a plot; the characters are normal people who in unguarded moments reveal fantastic preoccupations. In its insolent determination to explore the limits of good taste, the comedy is poised on a knife edge.

The authentic gaiety that lightens this gallows humour comes somewhat unexpectedly from the latter-day Hitchcock. The richness of the setting (photographed, in VistaVision and Technicolor, by Robert Burks) contributes to it; and John Michael Hayes' script, less coldly smart than his writing for *Rear Window* and *To Catch a Thief*, has an easy, sophisticated good-humour. As Miss Graveley and the captain engage in amiable conversation over Harry's corpse, or the painter discusses his work with the village storekeeper, charm slowly spreads. The piece is played with beautifully dry precision by Mildred Natwick and Mildred Dunnock,

with bumbling joviality by Edmund Gwenn and unforced cheerfulness by John Forsythe. Shirley MacLaine, though, most agreeably exploits its particular mood. Her cool, astringent comedy technique is a consistently engaging exercise in the art of keeping a straight face.

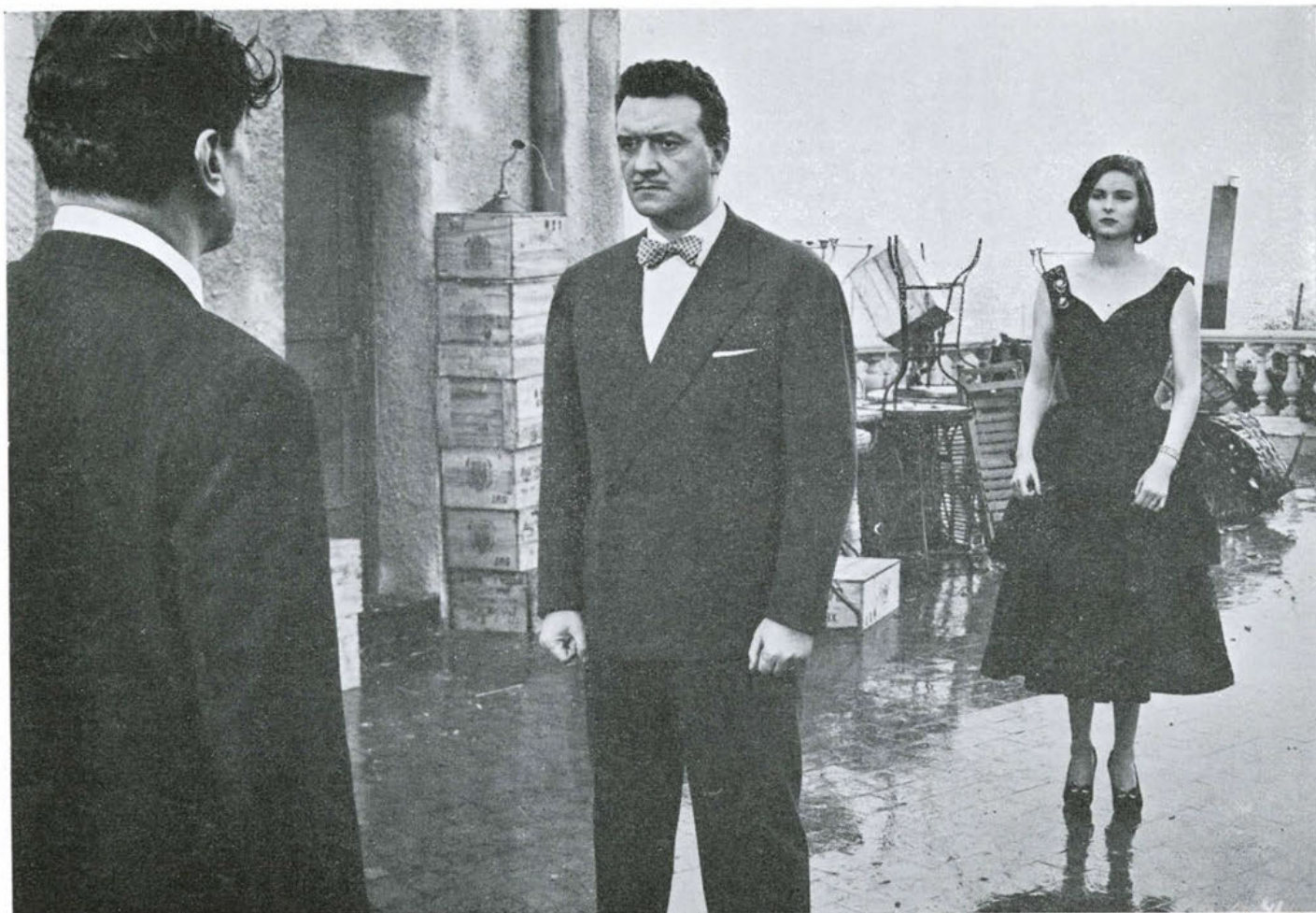
The Trouble with Harry is personal and idiosyncratic, a film with the somewhat specialised appeal of a John Collier short story or a Charles Addams cartoon. *The Man Who Knew too Much* is a thriller off the Hitchcock assembly line, a 1956 model with a setting on the fashionable tourist circuit (Marrakesh) and a smooth chromium finish. What it lacks, simply, is an engine powerful enough to set the whole apparatus in motion. The story that Hitchcock first filmed in 1934 survives reasonably intact. The tourist couple (James Stewart and Doris Day) stumble upon an assassination plot; their child is kidnapped to prevent them from talking, and the search for the kidnappers leads finally to a drab little chapel in a London back street. The scene of the assassination attempt is again the Albert Hall, and the wife's scream still serves its purpose in deflecting the assassin's bullet. The original climax, with its echoes of the Sidney Street siege, has gone; the main justification for a new and conventional denouement is that it brings Doris Day's voice powerfully into play.

Taking two hours to tell a story that he once fitted into 75 minutes, Hitchcock slows down the action with lengthy and only mildly entertaining dialogue passages and delays the kidnapping in favour of a sight-seeing tour of Marrakesh. The most melancholy comparison, though, is in the handling of the Albert Hall sequence. For the casual audacity of the 1934 version, Hitchcock here substitutes an academic exercise in suspense-building that flatly misfires. And he follows up this tactical mistake with a strategic one, moving immediately to another suspense sequence no less slow and solemn.

Momentarily, Hitchcock still brings off the shock of surprise. The girl in the assassin's box at the Albert Hall concert quietly follows the score; footsteps echo down an empty, sunlit street; the mildly villainous kidnappers (Bernard Miles and Brenda de Banzie) prepare simultaneously to organise a chapel service and an assassination. But where the earlier film went like a bullet, the remake weightily ambles. *The Man Who Knew too Much* is a thriller of the most straightforward kind, an affair of pursuit and movement; and for Hitchcock, it is now apparent, the chase itself has lost its excitement.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.





Otello Toso and Lucia Bose in "Death of a Cyclist".

DEATH OF A CYCLIST

THE political facts concerning the director of *Death of a Cyclist* which were reported in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, necessarily affect one's view of the film itself. Briefly, after sharing the Critics' prize at Cannes last year and being commended in the French press for its political candour, the film came under fire from the Spanish press. Juan Antonio Bardem, who had come to be identified by the authorities with the political unrest among Spanish students, was arrested during the shooting of his next film. His subsequent release is said to have been the result of external pressure and he is at the moment finishing the film. What the future holds for him in the Spanish cinema remains however a matter for uneasy speculation.

Death of a Cyclist (Leontine) conveys its social anger through the medium of a popularly acceptable thriller. The story is conventional enough: the young wife of a wealthy industrialist, travelling back by car from a secret meeting with her lover, kills a cyclist in a motor accident on a deserted road. The couple intend to conceal the accident, but when, under pressure of conscience and suspicion, the lover decides to give himself up to the police, his mistress runs him down with her car at the scene of the original accident and drives away. Speeding away across a narrow bridge, she swerves to avoid another cyclist and her car plunges over the bridge. The cyclist sees her dead body in the wreck and pedals on...

Within this excitingly told melodrama, Bardem unfolds a sort of moral sub-plot about the motives which lead the young lover to give himself up to the police. Juan is a university professor holding his position through the patronage of influential friends; memories of the comradeships of the war and contacts with his students lead him to revolt against the vulgarity and greed of his own set and to identify himself with the simpler values he finds in the lives of his students. He comes to see his guilt for the death of the cyclist as part of the wider guilt of the privileged towards the rest of society. His decision to give himself up becomes an act of expiation: he

can do nothing to change the society he lives in, but at least he can purge himself of his associations with it.

Even if conditions of Spanish censorship had permitted a more direct frontal attack, Bardem's oblique approach would have remained dramatically the right one. Yet, honestly and ingeniously though the conflicts are worked out, the film's assertion of individual dignity in the face of a decadent society does not come across with the force one might have expected. Employing an ostentatious, rather hysterical editing style, Bardem's continuity covers a great deal of ground but does not allow him to get close enough to his central characters. Juan, as played by Alberto Closas, emerges as a sort of theoretical good man, lacking the authority the part demands: his moral revolt is grafted on to him by the director's conception, it does not spring out of the character we see. Over and above this there is a strange dichotomy in the film between Bardem's treatment of the two sections of society which he sees in opposition to each other. With the smart set he is ruthless and bitter: the cocktail parties, art exhibitions and social functions are seen with a sharp eye for the revealing detail. When he comes to look at people who embody the values the film stands for—Juan's mother, the students, the neighbours of the dead cyclist—the observation becomes rather concocted and thin. Fundamentally, one feels, Bardem is more interested in the film's social implications than in the individuality of his characters. As a result the film makes its courageous and admirable gesture with a rather cold hand.

KAREL REISZ

TRAPEZE

THE combination of Hecht-Lancaster and Carol Reed was promising: one hoped for a return by the director to an earlier, more personal style and even, perhaps, for a film that really conjured up the harsh and somehow sad atmosphere of the circus. *Trapeze*

(United Artists), therefore, is a disappointment. It has all the ingredients of a popular success; but it might have been made by any competent director, and its circus setting is a familiar affair of much too aseptic tinsel and hoop-la.

A basic handicap is the script, based on Max Catto's novel *The Killing Frost*, which lacks a clear-cut dramatic line and offers few opportunities for anything but two-dimensional characterisation. It concerns a veteran trapeze artist, Mike Ribble, crippled by an old fall; Tino, the young man from Brooklyn whom Mike teaches to become a "flyer"; and Lola, the Italian girl who worms her way into their act and causes trouble between them. There are two threads to the story: the jealousy between Mike and Tino over Lola, and the question of whether Tino will achieve his and Mike's ambition of performing a "triple"—three somersaults in the second or two that elapse between letting go of one trapeze and being caught by a partner on the other. The romantic theme is unashamedly novelettish: Lola, who in the early scenes has been firmly established as a thoroughgoing gold-digger, becomes unaccountably tender and self-sacrificing when she realises Mike really loves her. This conveniently makes way for a happy ending. The business of the "triple" indicates an attempt by the producers to find a sure-fire melodramatic gimmick, and it involves the unlikely spectacle in the climax of the circus audience and the other performers going mad with enthusiasm when Tino at last achieves the feat. It is typical, too, that on this one occasion, thanks to calculated scripting, there is no safety net.

To spread this somewhat tenuous material over nearly an hour and three quarters has required a good deal of padding—arguments with the mercenary circus boss (Thomas Gomez), pats on the back from a New York circus impresario, a bleak little sub-plot about an old flame of Mike's (Katy Jurado) and her unappreciative husband. For the rest there is the hurly-burly of the circus—an overcrowded background of elephants, lions, dancers, clowns and a sympathetic dwarf. The trapeze work has its graceful excitements, and the "doubling" of the principals in these scenes is convincing. I personally found only three moments in the film which really caught the imagination: the trio's first appearance, after much practice, before the public; the scene in which Mike, being looked after by Lola after he has been mauled by a lion, realises she loves him; the shot of the ballet girl fluttering apprehensively to the side of the ring when she sees that Mike and Tino are going to perform without a safety net.

It seems that the three stars had to do a lot of gruelling and possibly dangerous work on the trapeze, and this would hardly encourage relaxed and thought-out performances on the ground. Burt Lancaster, however, plays sympathetically as Mike and alone conveys the sense of being emotionally involved in the story. Tony Curtis' Tino is a stock figure of innocent enthusiasm, and Gina Lollobrigida, unbecomingly foreshortened by tights and certain camera angles, is unable to encompass the inconsistencies of Lola. Robert Krasker's CinemaScope camera-work is effectively mobile, but the colour (De Luxe) rather insipid. The final impression left by the film is that Carol Reed was not stimulated to make more than an efficiently literal translation of a conventional box-office script.

JOHN WILCOX

PATTERNS OF POWER

PATTERNS of Power (United Artists) exemplifies the current phase in American cinema of filming successful television plays (*Marty*, *Ransom*, *The Rack*, *Wedding Breakfast*). Rod Serling, the author of *Patterns*, is the most prolific of those TV playwrights whose works are being filmed, having at the moment six of his plays down for screen treatment. The film is directed by its original director, Fielder Cook. Its producer, Michael Myerberg, an interesting personality whose previous credits include work on Disney's *Fantasia* and production of the "kinemin" puppet film *Hansel and Gretel*, is currently producing *Waiting for Godot* on Broadway and has a film option on two more of Serling's plays.

Television, in its presentation of hour-long plays, has developed a technique of setting up an easily grasped gimmick "situation" (parents in desperate disagreement about whether to pay the ransom for their kidnapped child; the court martial of an officer accused of collaboration while a communist prisoner of war) and letting the drama of this situation work itself out to a climax, not always entirely conclusive, within the compass of some highly pitched

dialogue scenes. In the main, characterisation is kept on a fairly superficial level, the central situation itself being allowed to dictate character portrayal. The film versions of these plays, though padding out the originals, have not generally succeeded in filling out their characters.

Before the credits of *Patterns of Power*, the camera takes in the New York skyline, panning across the skyscrapers until it sweeps down upon the massive Ramsey Building. The scene is quickly and deftly set: the lobby of the building is crowded with scurrying office workers, the elevators spill out their loads of typists and secretaries, while the company's president, in his private elevator, travels up to his executive suite alone. Along the main corridor and round the refreshment trolley the office staff chat quietly and viciously about the young production engineer who is that day joining the organisation, and who is evidently being groomed for a "top echelon" position.

Ramsey, the company's president, has in fact brought Fred Staples to New York to replace the elderly vice-president, Briggs, whose views he regards as old-fashioned. Ramsey's attempts to bully Briggs into resignation (through a series of stormy scenes at board meetings) eventually result in Briggs' death, and the film's key scene brings together Staples, ambitious for promotion but appalled at the conditions attached to it, and the unrelenting Ramsey. Staples takes the job on his own terms, as Ramsey's declared opponent, and the battle for power goes on.

If there is ambiguity in this final reel, it is typical of the television play method, the habit of stating rather than developing a situation. To all intents and purposes the young engineer has won through; or has he? What is one *really* to make of Ramsey? Are we to regard his closing credo as sincere ("It's no one's business. It belongs to those who can keep it growing. It belongs to whoever has the brains, the nerve and the skill to take it away from us"); or does he offer Staples the job because he needs an opponent within his circle, someone who will stimulate his own relentless drive? The film, in fact, leaves the impression that it has shirked the real issue, that in resolving its "problem" it has ended where it started out. Strong performances by Everett Sloane (Ramsey), Ed Begley (Briggs) and Van Heflin (Staples), and Boris Kaufman's photography, help to gloss over this essential weakness in a concentrated, lively but hardly persuasive study of power politics in big business.

JOHN CUTTS



"Trapeze": Gina Lollobrigida and Burt Lancaster.

THERESE RAQUIN

WHEN a director of the eminence of Marcel Carné makes a film version of a famous novel, and himself collaborates on the script, it is reasonable to assume a fascination with the original work, and justifiable to bear the original values in mind when assessing the film. To do so in this case is to court extreme disappointment. Nevertheless a consideration of the main changes throws a clear light on the preoccupations and responses of this director.

The film's background is no longer the squalid Parisian back street of the 'eighties, but provincial Lyons weakly pictured as of today. Zola's novel, in as much as the unconscious intrusion of his gloomy romanticism allowed him, was conceived as a scientific account of passions, of chemical attraction and repulsion and the power of terror and guilt to over-ride all other considerations. That he did not wholly succeed in such a clinical exposition perhaps accounts for Carné's initial interest in the subject, since it gave him the opportunity to reinterpret the doom-laden atmosphere in terms of his own limply resigned romanticism.

The interior of the Raquins' house is effectively old-fashioned, cluttered and claustrophobic. The relations, however, are stated with such empty emphasis that—recalling that the time is, after all, the present—one wonders why such a strong and clear-sighted girl as Thérèse does not simply get up and leave. Madame Raquin is sour and hostile to her, Camille, her husband, bullying and indifferent, and the introduction of the Italian stranger who becomes a regular visitor seems to do little more than ruffle the surface of life in the house. (Laurent is now no longer a bad painter but a good lorry driver—*un bon gar!*) The characters stand around or play cards, idle and uneloquent, waiting for their chance to move in situations which need no psychological complexity to animate them. A passion damply ignites between Laurent and Thérèse—a kiss in a bedroom, a bleak reunion in a park café—and the scene is set for the disposal of Camille. It transpires, however, that this is not to be instigated by lust. These lovers are stock Carné characters, resignedly star-crossed, and their physical passion stays well within the definitions of romantic love. This flabby departure from Zola's intention makes one wonder how the director's response to the story could ever have been strong enough to stimulate the making of the film.

The main motivation of guilt is then removed. Camille's death cannot be a callous plot by the lovers; it must occur, unplanned, in a burst of Latin temperament. No leisurely drowning, in fact, but a push from an express train. There is in consequence no shared guilt, no agony of remorse to be worked through under the pitiless stare of a paralysed Madame Raquin. Thérèse is free to withdraw from the relationship with Laurent after the crime—which she does. They are two people in love, separated as a result of a moment's rashness.

How then is justice to be done? There can be no psychological analysis, no play on the nerves. Madame Raquin has nothing to glare at but a bowl of soup brought to her once a day. We are reduced to the Carné-haunting avatar, lent by Germany many years ago to ruin *Les Visiteurs du Soir* and *Les Portes de la Nuit* and to impregnate *Les Enfants du Paradis* with wistful doom—*Le Destin*. The agent is a sailor who was in the railway compartment at the time of the dark deed. On leaving the navy, he finds himself in need of money to set up a little business and sees the

opportunity for blackmail. Visiting Thérèse, he idles round the room, helps himself insolently to fruit, indulging in the virtuoso timing of his breed familiar since the days of Hitchcock's *Blackmail*. But let us have it both ways. He is a *good* little blackmailer. This is his single lapse: he does not intend systematically to bleed his victims, just as Laurent does not intend regularly to throw people out of trains. They are the little people, impregnated with a *poésie douce et triste des rues*, where danger resides in a 'tu' from a stranger; theirs are ordinary, "human" failings, calling for compassion rather than blame. Having got the money, the blackmailer has time for one last sympathetic word to a passing girl before Destin rides him down with a ten-ton lorry. At his hotel waits another human *épave*—a simple chambermaid who has already offered her poor body for some fifty francs as a natural item on the tariff list, unaware that any other values exist in this sad world, and who is moved to instant love when the blackmailer, spontaneously generous, offers her 100 francs for nothing. She has instructions to post a letter to the police denouncing the lovers in the event of the blackmailer's failure to return by a certain time. He does not return, and the letter is despatched. A French postman, young and laughing, takes it: "Je suis les facteur des amoureux", he declares.

For all its faults, Zola's original possessed a crude, undeniable power. Its essence resists absolutely a conversion into Carné's terms. These, effective as a reflection of a particular mood in France at a particular time, were once strongly felt, and artistically rendered in *Le Jour se Lève*. Seen here, wearily atrophied as so often in the latter years, they reflect only a self-deceiving and old-fashioned sentimentality.

In the playing, Simone Signoret remains remote and statuesque, an intelligent actress at a loss to know what to play. Raf Vallone's honest talent wars with the general falsity of atmosphere, and only Roland Lesaffre as the blackmailer wholeheartedly accepts the script's invitation to give a display of flashy, external tricks.

DEREK PROUSE

In Brief

STORM CENTRE (Columbia). Some years ago, when the subject was originally announced for production under the title of *The Library*, this might have seemed a bravely controversial piece of work. Walking the liberal tightrope, vociferously affirming its hatred of Communism while simultaneously attacking the tactics of the witch-hunt and the smear campaign, *Storm Centre* still manages an occasional sharp comment on the tyranny of fear that was the foundation of McCarthyism. But events have already left the film somewhat behind. The simplified black-and-white language of headline journalism looks inadequate when the subject is no longer directly in the news; and this story of a small town librarian who is sacked when she refuses to remove a subversive book (called, rather implausibly, *The Communist Dream*) from her shelves, requires treatment more penetrating and analytical. There is a valid situation in the uncompromising obstinacy of the librarian, the defiant professional pride that ignores expediency and insists on seeing every issue as a matter of principle. But the film disposes of this in its early stages, and later developments are largely concerned with a small boy who becomes so emotionally disturbed by the town's atmosphere of ingrown hatred that he finally sets fire to the library. Unlikely in itself, as an extreme example of the possible consequences of the witch-hunt mentality, this episode is superficially and callously handled by the director, Daniel Taradash, who uses the child's obsessive terrors mainly to trigger off the melodramatic climax.

The half-stated situation and the evasively emotional resolution are predictable features of the contemporary American problem picture. *Storm Centre* at least manages to come down fairly firmly on the right side, however much the opportunist double-dealing of its method grates. As the victim of the witch-hunt, Bette Davis gives a subdued but dourly resolute performance. An early scene in which she defends her membership of certain Communist front organisations ("I didn't share their ideals—they shared some of mine") is sharpened up by the actress's playing. But Daniel Taradash (who was also responsible, with Elick Moll, for the script) seems reluctant decisively to commit himself, to advance from the textbook demonstration of political wrong-headedness to the human situation.—PENELOPE HOUSTON.

"Thérèse Raquin": bourgeois family and star-crossed lovers.



PACIFIC DESTINY (*British Lion*). "For all its admitted faults of principle, the old system of British imperialism did not always work out in practice as ruthlessly as some of its accusers would have the world believe today. . . . Not less love than self interest went into the building of the British Empire, old style. . . ." Thus Sir Arthur Grimble in the preface to his book *A Pattern of Islands*, on which this film is based. It is to the credit of James Lawrie, the producer, and his team of relative newcomers that much of Sir Arthur's feeling for the Pacific islands and their people, and a good deal of his gentle humour, should have survived a prolonged translation to celluloid and remain to charm one into indulgence towards such weaknesses as scrappiness of incident, blurred characterisation and occasional uncertainty of aim. Originally to have been directed by Jack Lee, who wrote the first adaptation, the film was finally made by Wolf Rilla entirely on location in Samoa. Rilla is a young director from B.B.C. television, who has directed several second features (*The Blue Peter*, *Stock Car*).

As Flaherty discovered, conflict between man and his environment is not greatly in evidence in the South Seas. *Pacific Destiny* follows its original author in eschewing tropical hurricanes and other natural shocks, and seeks its tension in the serio-comic conflicts between man and man—white and naive on the one hand, brown and dignified on the other. The one exception is an over-melodramatic climax involving a witch doctor, reminiscent of *Men of Two Worlds*. It is pleasant to record that the humour throughout is at the expense of the white man.

Denholm Elliott is well cast as the puppy-like Grimble, and Susan Stephen is adequate in a stereotyped loyal-little-wife role. Michael Hordern almost upsets the balance of the film by over-playing the cynical, whisky-loving Resident Commissioner, but it is a minor part. CinemaScope and Eastman Colour create some striking land and seascapes.—TONY HODGKINSON.

YIELD TO THE NIGHT (*A.B.-Pathé*). The most important thing about *Yield to the Night* is not so much its quality as a film, as the exceptional nature of its attempt. Here is a British picture which is daring enough to take as its theme the last few days in the life of a murderess condemned to be hanged; and brave enough to suggest that the whole business is not one that reflects the utmost credit on society. Given the treatment it deserves, this subject would be almost intolerable, savage, terrifying and salutary. *Yield to the Night* is intermittently tense, and makes some good points, but it lapses too often into clichés of characterisation and style, and the final tableau, with Geoffrey Keen as the daddy-knows-best prison padre, beats a painful retreat into conformism. Diana Dors gives an honest, suffering performance as the girl; Yvonne Mitchell is insufferably smug as a wardress with a beautiful soul. Even with such reservations, however, the makers of this film (director, J. Lee Thompson; scriptwriters, John Cresswell and Joan Henry) must be saluted for a rare seriousness of intention: this is enough of a departure for one to hope that they achieve commercial success.—ALBERTA MARLOW.

TWELFTH NIGHT (*Contemporary*). Following closely on the heels of *Othello* comes another Shakespeare film from Russia—a version of *Twelfth Night* adapted and directed by Yan Fried. The choice of this particular play in itself gives rise to speculation: what might the Russians make of the curious topsy-turvy world of Shakespeare's Illyria? In the event, a good deal of the spirit of the original has survived, though the rocky and mountainous settings and the bluff heartiness of the playing reveal an unmistakable Russian inspiration. Shakespeareans will note that much of the text has been cut and rearranged and several characters, notably Malvolio, relegated to the background. Perhaps the least satisfactory aspect of the production is the actual direction. *Othello* was remarkable for Youtkevich's strongly personal conception of the play; here the handling is generally respectable and occasionally a little dull. Of the principals, the outstanding performance is



"Twelfth Night": A. Larionova as Olivia and Klara Luchko as Viola.

certainly that of Klara Luchko, who doubles the parts of Viola and Sebastian. Alternately tender and gallant, her playing is captivatingly fresh and alive. The clowns (Sir Toby happily tipsy; Sir Andrew languid and effeminate) are sharply, amusingly and fairly broadly caricatured. The colour, especially in the exteriors, shows off to advantage the attractive costume design. But a final assessment to some extent depends on how highly one values Shakespeare's own contribution. A few roughly worded subtitles here recall the most famous lines, but in losing the sense of the spoken word one is bound also to lose much of the feel of the play, the appreciation of details in acting style and delivery. There is little consolation, for an English audience, in the knowledge that both *Othello* and *Twelfth Night* have been translated by some of Russia's most respected Shakespearean authorities.—JOHN GILLET.

THE AFRICAN LION (*Walt Disney*). The third of Disney's feature-length "True Life Adventures" is, in certain respects, the best of the series so far. The commentary, a tiresomely facetious appendage in the past, is here reasonably straightforward and informative; and the music is much less intrusive than usual. More positively, the film is a considerable technical feat: it was shot over a period of many months by Alfred Milotte and his wife Elma on a plateau near Kilimanjaro. About 100,000 feet of 16 mm. film was edited and blown up to just over 6,000 feet of 35 mm. The use of telephoto lenses is quite remarkable: one rarely has the disconcerting sense, often experienced with this technique, of being removed from the subject; one is right on top of it. Rather, it is the somewhat patchy colour which tends to soften reality, to blur the beauties and ferocities of this Africa.

The lions—hunting, dozing on their backs, chasing off a lioness which ventures into the family circle—are very fine. An astonishing shot shows their prey, warned by some mysterious instinct that there is no danger, allowing a lion to stroll past them. I found two sequences particularly memorable: one demonstrates the enormous daintiness of a hippopotamus swimming under water, having his teeth picked by swarms of small fish; the other is a thrilling panning shot of a cheetah gradually breaking from a prowl into an 80 m.p.h. gallop after a doomed antelope.—JOHN WILCOX.



The World of Silence

by CATHERINE DUNCAN

THE first images of Cousteau's new film, *Le Monde du Silence*, show us a flight of divers bearing lighted torches plunging through the sea. With their masked faces and rubber breathing tubes, the yellow bottles of air on their backs and the blue flippers on their feet, these denizens of a submarine world descend, weightless, effortless, like figures in a strange ritual, or reminiscent of the flying devas on the mural paintings of the Tunhuang Caves. So Cousteau returns us to our ancient element, leading us back to a rediscovery of this world of silence which has for so many centuries been almost unknown, the haunted place of legend, of sirens and monsters, drowned cities and the giant octopus.

The discovery began twenty years ago when Talliez, Dumas and Cousteau started diving with the primitive submarine mask used in Polynesia and Japan and since the sixteenth century by the coral divers of the Mediterranean. This mask was their first clear eye on the wonders lying beneath the surface of the water. But they were still tied to the surface by the invisible cable of their breath, and their dream became the invention of an apparatus which would liberate the diver of cask and cable and launch him like a fish into the free discovery of the sea. The war and the destruction of the French fleet gave the young naval officer, Jacques Yves Cousteau, the opportunity to concentrate on this project. With Emile Gagnan he designed an autonomous diving apparatus which at the end of the war was to open the sea to a generation of new explorers.

But the physical discovery of a new world must be followed by its description, by the poets and artists who will render it spiritually habitable. In the case of the sea, the first explorers started from much the same point as the cave artists of antiquity who drew the first images of our earth on the rocks of Lascaux. Greek possesses a long list of words to describe

the sea, for the Greeks knew the sea and considered its knowledge as essential as the ability to read. But what they knew has been forgotten, and in modern languages no words existed to describe what the diver saw or felt. He could only fall back on the poetic image, the yellow and blue awakening of Rimbaud's phosphorous singers. And the submarine world might well have remained a mystery to the uninitiated had it not been for the film.

The first film made by Cousteau and his companions was *Par dixhuit mètres de Fond*, on submarine fishing when the divers were still equipped with only a mask. This was followed by *Epaves*, made during the Occupation under the astonished eyes of German guards who gaped through the clear water at the first exploration of wrecks by human tritons. In 1947 came *Paysages du Silence*.

I remember with what emotion I sat in the small projection theatre of the Cinémathèque Française and watched this film, which seemed for me the realisation of a dream that had haunted me since my childhood on the rocky coasts of Tasmania. Now at last I could enter the gardens of anemones, plane like a ray through the sombre grottoes. For me, the meeting of Dumas with the octopus, these two beings from different worlds, remains one of the most stirring encounters of the screen. Was this the terrible octopus of legend, this gentle cat of the sea arching its back under the caress of Dumas' hand? Was this the haunted world of legend and these bands of curious and confident fish the monsters of our imagination? The first step in civilising the new element had been taken.

Since then there have been other films, and a few years later the sea for the first time revealed its colours. Now, as culmination of these discoveries, comes the first full-length colour record, *The Silent World*. The film is a summary of

the voyages of the *Calypso*, a ship especially equipped by the French navy for its Groupe d'Etudes et des Recherches Sous-marines. It is a calypso itself of the camaraderie and common passion uniting the crew of divers under Cousteau's command, a record of their adventures and discoveries.

From the first ritual images the beauty of the submarine landscapes catches the breath of the audience. But, in spite of their sensitivity to the poetry of the sea, Cousteau allows the images to speak for themselves. The commentary is discreet, factual. He seems more concerned to impress us with the accessibility and familiarity of our new element; and for his divers, indeed, the apparatus which still seemed a futuristic appendage some years ago has now become a part of themselves, put on as casually as a hat or coat before going out of doors. The discoveries, though, are no longer casual. The *Calypso* is a floating laboratory to which scientists in every branch of study have added their equipment. Delicate apparatus graphs the humps and valleys of the sea-bed, and records the sounds emitted by different levels in the water. There are cameras which can be lowered to great depths, photographing their descent at regular intervals in much the same way as Marey filmed the movements of a horse. Bottles contain specimens of unknown fish caught in the teeming waters of the tropics. There is also the diverse equipment invented or developed by the Group for its particular needs, and varying from the recompression caisson to a cage designed for protection against sharks.

The adventures of the *Calypso* don't all take place under water. In the magnificent sequence of the dolphins, thousands of these sea dogs break the water like a trumpet call, leaping in martial ranks, drowning the depth chart with their chorus of mouse-like squeaks. Or there is the meeting with a flock of cachalots, when one of the baby whales swimming too close to the ship is mortally hurt and has to be killed. This is the signal for the sharks. Out of nowhere they appear; one, two, ten, until finally they are as thick as vultures circling round the whale's carcass. The shark cage is lowered, and behind the protection of its bars, the camera grazes those murderous jaws and records the bloody feast. On board, the men are attacked by a frenzy of loathing for these savages. Harpoon, line and boathook, the sharks are hauled on deck, pieces of whale still hanging from their jaws, hacked and bludgeoned in a ferocious carnage. The last of the victims, a leech fish clamped on the bare back of a man, comes as almost a relief after so much violence.

Dog days, too, the torpor of endless sea and nostalgia for the land. Sighted at last is an island, deserted except for sea birds and a colony of giant tortoises to be ridden, sat on, used as a picnic table or observed in the close-up of reproduction. Here the commentary is taken over in the pidgin French of an islander who recounts how the tortoise digs her nest in the sand, lays her eggs with infinite pain, and struggles, weary and weeping, back to the sea. A few weeks later the scuttering tribe of little tortoises follow, emerging from their sandy bed and heading by natural instinct towards the water.

But it is to the underwater world that we return with untiring interest. To the poignant discovery of the wreck, a Glasgow cargo ship sunk in 1942. There is no sound here except the suction of the diver's breathing, the empty ring of the ship's bell. The crew has all disappeared long ago. The ship is manned now by the sea's jungle growth, invading its holds, turning its motor bikes and trucks into a strange cargo. On the bridge only a fish keeps watch. And yet the tragedy has passed beyond human dimensions. It has become a part of man's history, preserved so faithfully intact under the glass case of the sea.

And, finally, there is Jo Jo, the codfish who is destined to become the first submarine pet of thousands of filmgoers. Engaging in his confidence and greedy for the food they offer him, he plagues the life out of his new-found friends the

divers, following them everywhere, until for the sake of peace they are obliged to shut him up in the shark cage. There poor Jo Jo noses pathetically against the bars, while his faithless friend sits like a farmwife on the bottom of the sea, scattering feathery grain to a ring of fishy chickens.

But if the film underlines the accessibility of the sea, it does not underestimate its dangers. The drunkenness of the depths waits for the lobster hunter who has descended beyond the safety limit; a drunkenness which tempts the diver to reject his breathing tube and sink into the long dream of oblivion. Or, if he escapes that danger, a drunkenness which explodes like champagne bubbles in the blood and causes the death of many coral, sponge and pearl divers. Hence the caisson of recompression on board, where the imprudent lobster fisher is destined to pass a couple of hours instead of sharing his catch with the others. The film recounts this episode with its usual matter of fact humour. Yet it is here that we touch the real problem, physical and artistic, of the world of silence. For this discovery is, in its final analysis, the conquest of space.

Physically, the conquest of depth has been the aim of Cousteau and his group from the first trial of the autonomous diving apparatus. On that day Talliez already declared that each metre gained in depth opened 300,000 cubic kilometres of vital space to humanity. Vital, because the sea is richer than the land. Fargues died at 120 metres down deepening that vital space. With a mixture of lighter gases, the Englishman Bollard reached 180 metres. The bathyscaphe has plunged over 4,000 metres into the submarine midnight. Physically, the sea's Everests are already within reach.

Yet space is spiritual as well as physical. Cousteau has still to film the blue wall of watery space where neither surface nor sea-bed, no rock or living thing, shows the diver the way out. Then panic overtakes him, the panic of man alone in unknown nothingness. The conquest of that space is the domain of the artist. To quote Herbert Read: "Long before space had been enveloped as architecture, it had existed in human consciousness as a bodiless mystery of which man was aware, but which he could not conceive. It was not a tangible place in which a familiar spirit could have existence; it was a nothingness out of which all imaginable powers could emerge. Some of these powers might be beneficent, others destructive, but all alike had to be propitiated. The work of art became an act of containment and propitiation." In the light of this quotation, are the first ritual images of Cousteau's film a mere hazard of pictorial research? On the contrary, it seems to me that the whole film, *Le Monde du Silence*, is an act of propitiation and containment, an essential step to further discovery and to man's presence in the sea.



Conference in Paris

by THOROLD DICKINSON

The first International Meeting of Film-makers, initially proposed at the 1955 Cannes Festival, took place in Paris in the week following this year's Festival. It was organised by the French Association des Auteurs de Films under the chairmanship of film director Jean-Paul Le Chanois, and was attended by film-makers from about thirty countries.

General subjects chosen by the Conference for discussion and resolutions were: (1) National Cinema; (2) Cultural Exchanges; (3) Freedom of Expression.

THE conference prospects were, frankly, somewhat alarming. It meant adjusting an unaccustomed ear to twenty-five various French accents, one of which turned out to be in fact French, and several to be those of interpreters laboriously translating pages of friendly clichés from eastern countries. The charming lilt of Chinese—northern or southern? The sudden realisation that all have been invited to Peking next year—what would be the language of discussion there? How to return the present hospitality in any case? On come the blinding lights of television and newsreel, and you lose sight of everyone save your neighbour, who is whispering: "Get up and answer *that* one". Which one?

Yet most of it I wouldn't have missed for worlds. It began with champagne, and between sessions we were entertained



Conference group: Chang Ke-Fen, Marcel Pagliero, Sergei Youtkevich, Tsai Chu-Sheng, Yin Li, Francois Perier, Anne Vernon.

by the film-makers, actors and technicians. We were welcomed by three thousand friends in the crowded theatre of the Palais de Chaillot, and were held by two unforgettable presentations: the superb miming of Marcel Marceau and his company, playing in golden silence or with an occasional musical accompaniment, and the unfaltering power of Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz's film study of intolerance, *Native Land*.

Who were there? Strand himself, and that perpetual fountain of ideas, Zavattini; Cavalcanti the traveller (next stop: China), Youtkevich and Vassiliev from Russia, Benoit-Levy, Gance, L'Herbier, Daquin and Pagnol, Joris Ivens and Henri Storck, the Henning-Jensens from Denmark. Among the newcomers: Pierre Kast, Cacoyannis from Greece, Alazraki from Mexico, Kavoussi from Iran, Fabri from Hungary, Lindsay Anderson from the U.K., Dos Santos from Brazil. From the U.S.A. came Preminger and Sturges (momentarily), John Berry and Michael Wilson, writer of *A Place in the Sun* and *Salt of the Earth*. Poles, Chinese, Roumanians, Bulgarians: no space to list them all. There were more from the West than from behind the Iron Curtain, through which, in that gathering at least, currents of thought were free to flow back and forth.

But did they flow? Did we get more out of it individually than collectively? The nationalised film industries sent delegates, presumably salaried, and they tended to give the impression that they came from promised lands. From commercial industries individuals came under their own steam, and it was from them that the substance of the discussions appeared generally to stem. Certain of these individuals seemed to regret that their own film industries were run by private enterprise, but they encountered strong and reasoned opposition from their fellows.

II

At an early session we discussed the particular business of the International Federation of Film Authors, founded four years ago and comprising the French, British, Italian and Spanish associations. Speaking for the association, Louis Chavance, its secretary, referred to the French "Beau-

Cavalcanti, Sergei Vassiliev and Joris Ivens.



marchais Laws" of 1791 and 1793, which protect the right to the title of a work, the right to safeguard the work itself (against suppression, mutilation, etc.), and the right of the artist to withdraw his work if he is not satisfied with it. Chavance begged us to recommend to our colleagues at home adoption of the French decision whereby writers, directors and composers share the authorship of films, giving the very practical reason that the French Senate is in process of passing a law, in Article 35 of which appears the following: "The relinquishing by the author (of a film) of the rights in his work can be total or partial. . . . An author should enjoy proportional participation in the receipts deriving therefrom. . . ." If and when this law is passed, writers, directors and composers of films shown publicly in France will be entitled to a percentage of the takings, and these sums can best be disbursed by national associations of film authors.

Chavance pointed out that the development of television was creating further problems for film authors. Short and long TV films were already being dubbed into foreign languages for limited performances on television, for each of which the author's fee should be correspondingly high. He mentioned an author's fee of £100 for each performance of a full-length British fictional TV film dubbed into French. This again was a job for the Federation.

III

I put this matter first, as it was the particular and immediately practical matter of urgency for the conference. As a result, several new national associations will be founded and will affiliate themselves to the central body. At the general discussions, Le Chanois, whether taking the chair or sitting alongside, proved a vigilant steersman. He allowed the conference at first to wander among a diversity of opinions and points, later helping it along a more disciplined path.

The discussion on National Cinema was diffuse but healthy. We heard about (and later saw with interest) Dos Santos' feature *Rio 40 Degrees*, made for £5,000, and a film to which the Brazilian authorities have reacted much as did the Italian government to *Umberto D.* It is a logical irony that realism tends to induce antipathy in the country of origin while winning genuine understanding abroad. Alazraki, director of *Raices*, urged that such films, to be good, should appeal at home as well. At another point he asserted that the two best films yet made about Mexico were both the work of discerning foreigners—Eisenstein and Paul Strand. Youtkevich said that the world regards the Soviet Union as the home of vodka-caviar-Cossacks-and-samovars plus propaganda: maybe a Frenchman could come to show the world Russia as it really is.

Autant-Lara criticised co-production and L'Herbier attacked "millionaires' films", what the Italians call "white telephone pictures". It was revealed that in some cases the absolute film rights of characteristically national subjects



Georges Rouquier (left) with the Brazilian director Pereira Dos Santos.

had been sold abroad: no one in Sweden could film any story by Selma Lagerlof, no one in Hungary any work by Molnar. It is as though the British had sold abroad the absolute screen rights in the complete works of Thomas Hardy. Michael Wilson put in a plea for the original screenplay, conceived and executed in terms of cinema. He quoted *Variety* as stating that the 37 biggest Hollywood projects for 1956 were all adaptations from outside sources. U.S. scriptwriters spend most of their time struggling with material alien to the screen, much of it alien also to American thought and conditions and losing its integrity in adaptation. He stressed the need for authors to lease their work rather than sell it outright.

Intercut: I was delighted to overhear a Polish exile translating into English, for the benefit of a Chinaman, a speech given in French by a U.S. delegate from Hollywood. Perhaps an agreed universal language is the long-term answer—and no more dubbing.

A strong attack on the abuses of co-production was led by Autant-Lara. He maintained that such arrangements should be solely economic, and should not involve distortion of a national subject, miscasting of players, or the splitting of a film's character in attempts to make it bi-national. He and others attacked censorship, Autant-Lara describing film censors as the police of thought. It became clear that in Latin countries official censorship is more often political than moral. Morals are taken care of by religious organisations, whose officious censorship exerts a powerful influence with all but the most sophisticated audiences.

As the week swept on, one became aware that words like *police* and *censorship* conjure up a different image in Britain from those perceived by Latins, Slavs and Americans. For



Michael Cacoyannis (left) talks with Benito Alazraki, director of the Mexican film "Raices".

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

On National Cinema :

Every nation has the right to its own production of films and to access to the screens of all countries. Old-established industries should not swamp the screens of less favoured nations, but should help them to establish their own production with access to material equipment and expert advice. Co-production between nations should be organised solely from the point of view of economics and should respect in every department the integral character of the subject concerned. . . . Film training schools, now internationally affiliated, should be open to all students, particularly those from countries where no such schools yet exist. Film festivals should be urged to present films which authentically reflect national characteristics.

On Cultural Exchanges :

Let the film-makers of all nations—

- (1) Try to make available acknowledged works of art which meet with distribution obstacles in their own country.
- (2) Protect foreign films from alterations made without the approval of their authors.
- (3) Intervene whenever an acknowledged work of art is forbidden export from its country of origin.
- (4) Encourage in their own countries international film festivals unrestricted by extraneous conditions of any kind.
- (5) Demand the standardisation of all screens, so that no film shall be projected on any screen of a shape or size other than that for which it was designed.
- (6) Make known by means of an international bulletin audience reactions in each country to films made abroad.
- (7) Pay respect to all efforts for the international exchange of films, to UNESCO, to the International Federation of Film Archives, and to the International Centre for Film Schools.
- (8) Welcome film-makers forbidden to work in their own countries.

On Freedom of Expression :

Cinema is an art limited too often by economic, commercial or other restrictions. Films are made for the millions—no film exists without an audience—and any demand for freedom of expression is justified only by a sense of responsibility. The conference recognised the moral influence of the cinema, notably its effect on the young. This sense of responsibility should encourage the film-maker to fight against triviality, dishonesty, and everything tending to degrade human dignity; to think twice about the way in which he will depict other peoples and races, to avoid misrepresentation and gross caricature.

The conference affirmed its will to fight against all forms of censorship (pre-censorship, official censorship, the officious censorship of powerful organisations). They decided to plead on an international level before the Hague Tribunal, the International Labour Bureau at Geneva and UNESCO against any obstacles to the right of film-makers to work or any attempts on their persons or dignity. They stood out against the practice of mutilating films and changing titles without consulting the authors, and against the destruction of old films of value to mankind. They recommended general adoption of the system of legal deposit and the promotion of film archives.

Finally, the conference adopted the proposal of Cesare Zavattini, derived from his slogan "films of value to mankind", to publish regular lists of approved films and to organise annually a week of public showings of the best of these films available.

example, in countries which have been occupied by another power, it is precisely the police and the censorship who were forced to collaborate up to the hilt. Individuals might resist nobly, but the organisations were darkly involved.

Another strong divergence of opinion emerged between those who were in favour of cultivating the discriminating public, even at the risk of splitting it off from the popular audience, and those who believed in entertaining any audience, popular or otherwise. This is an issue existing in all nations, whatever their political complexion, this continual argument between those who would lead their audience and those who would serve it.

But all were ready to hear and applaud Zavattini, who in his turn was eager to embrace every liberal idea and its exponent too. It was Zavattini who gave the conference its slogan: to make films of value to mankind. Speaking of the influence of the cinema, he said that a film is an injection, and it is better to give fifty diffused injections that will save the patient rather than the big one that kills him. He and others spoke of the film-maker's responsibility. Useless to decry censorship if you give them censorable films: "Everyone denounces the censorship as Public Enemy No. 1, but censorship likes fine films, so let us make fine films".

An American spoke of a man who came up to him and asked if he had directed a certain film. The American, expecting praise, received a denunciation: "Why did you make that film?" — "Well, even a film director has to eat". "Why, even to eat, did you make that film?"

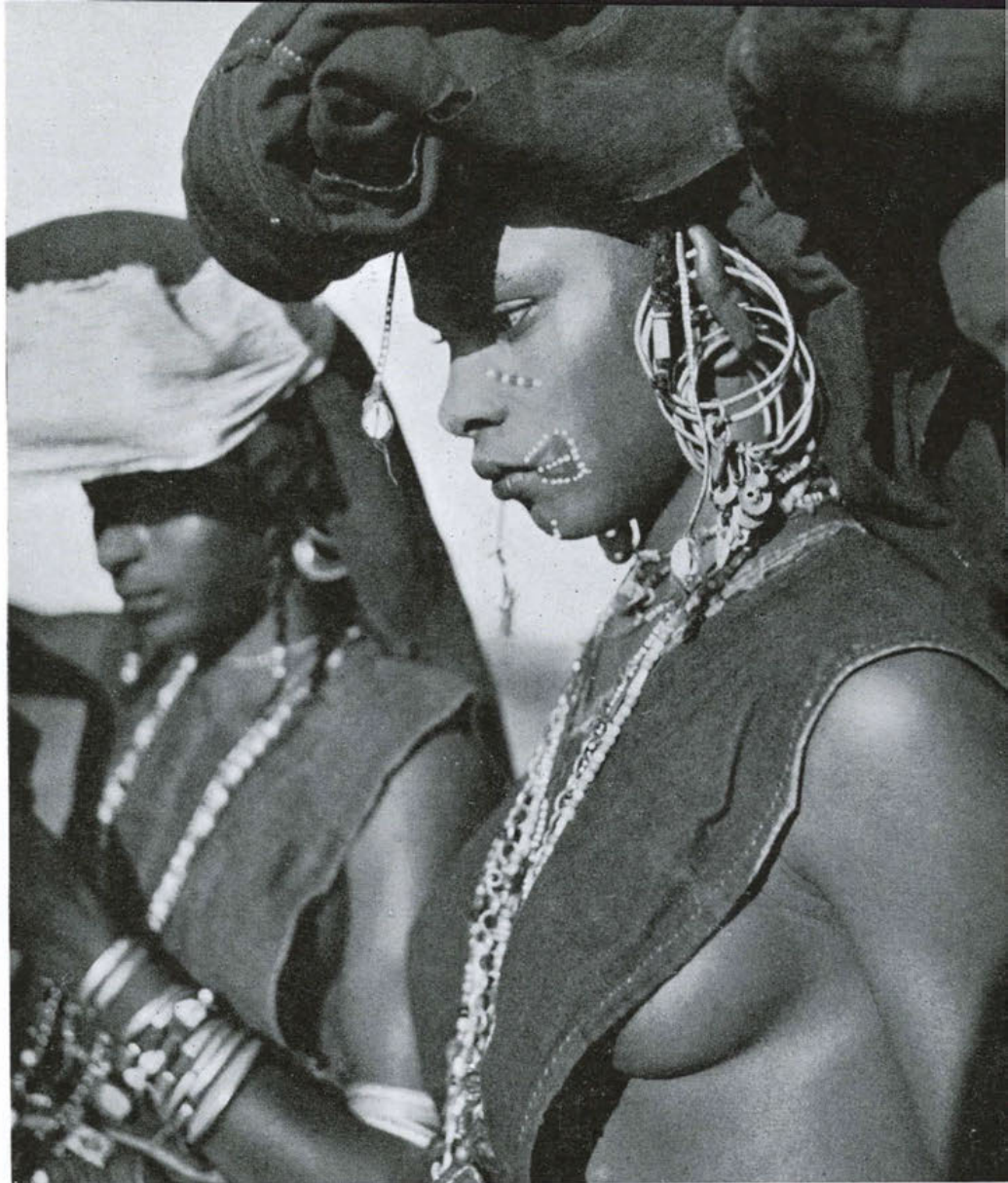
After its general discussions in public, the congress divided itself into four committees to discuss the three general topics listed above and the particular business of the international federation of film authors. These were private sessions, and their conclusions were read out, redrafted where necessary, and approved at a final public session on May 18th. On the following days, available members discussed the future: for this movement has a future. If the scientists have decided that the world is to shrink, let it shrink in fair and equitable proportions. And let the cinema play its own part in the process of adjustment.

Cesare Zavattini



Recording Africa

by ALAIN TANNER



"Bororo".

ANY work taking the people of Africa for its subject must have its real starting point in ethnography, and the ethnographical record is perhaps the screen's most constructive contribution to our understanding of modern Africa. Before going to the centre of the subject, though, it might be useful briefly to place it in its context, which is the cinema's traditional attitude and approach to the African theme.

For the commercial cinema, Africa provides one of the most marketable of exotic settings. And in its readiness to exploit the setting, its lack of sympathy or concern for the people themselves, the commercial screen seems to be reflecting a general attitude towards the African which has its origins certainly in ignorance, and sometimes in contempt. There have been exceptions, films which have broken away from the simple and trusted formula of the safari or the jungle trek, which have concerned themselves with the African people and have not affronted reality. But the conventions of the commercial cinema are firmly established; and the amateur productions, films made by big-game hunters or commercial travellers and displayed, sometimes with a certain presumption, to the paying public, as a rule conform to this pattern. Again, their emphasis is on the superficially strange and exotic. Finally, there is the scientific film, designed initially for a specialised audience, but significant in that it marks the essential point of departure for a serious film study of Africa.

It was natural that ethnographers should be the first to provide the cinema with documents sufficiently informed and

serious to answer the needs of scholarship. Until recently, however, films of this kind were accounts of scientific work by experts, and inevitably of rather restricted interest. To advance from scientific demonstration to the making of films valuable in their own right, it was necessary to widen the angle of vision without slackening the grip on reality. This stage has now been passed, and there exists a small group of film-makers, most of them young men, who are willing to investigate reality and prepared to address themselves to a steadily growing audience. They have, too, the indispensable asset of a real love for their subject, strengthened if anything by the degree of obstinacy needed to overcome the difficulties they encounter.

Three of their films—Henry Brandt's *Bororo* and Jean Rouch's *Les Fils de l'Eau* and *Les Maîtres Fous*—were shown in London last winter in programmes arranged by the British Film Institute, and since I have space here to consider only a few films I shall restrict myself to these.

2

Bororo derives its name from that of a strange little tribe, a section of the Peuhl people, among whom Brandt lived for many months. He has admirably expressed their striking nobility of character, through images which often have great beauty and which are fittingly linked in the editing with the rhythm of life and of the seasons. His film has the effect of a kind of respiration, full and deep, and there is a sense almost of nostalgia in its reconstruction of the lives of these eternal

nomads, mistrustful of the worlds of Islam and of Europe and escaping from them into the vast plains south of the Sahara Desert.

This tribe represents only a fraction of the great Peuhl people whose various elements have established themselves in different parts of West Africa, many of them adopting the Moslem faith. The Bororo, though, have never committed themselves to this religion, and have jealously preserved the way of life traditional to them since their migration to the West. Their purpose seems, in effect, to safeguard their own integrity and dignity, consciously to withstand pressures from the outside world. Their worship of beauty finds its most complete expression at the time of a great feast, when the nomadic tribes gather at the end of the dry season. Brandt was the first to film this remarkable and little-known ceremony, a project which the Bororo were at first somewhat reluctant to permit. The occasion gave him the chance to make a unique record and at the same time to reveal an authentic flair for film-making. And this was perhaps the first film of its kind to affect me so deeply, through its distinctive insight into the lives of a people who seem bound, sooner or later, to disappear into the world that they reject. The rhythms of their existence, their sense of time and space, seem alien to the civilisation around them; their pride—that of men who recoil from the idea of a settled existence, and who drive their herds endlessly before them to the most distant limits of the horizon—must inevitably soon be humbled. But they will still exist for us on the screen, and that is the value of Brandt's achievement.

3

Les Fils de l'Eau does not deal with so specific a theme, but touches on a variety of subjects in order to convey the essence of a way of life. The film assembles, or rather condenses, seven shorts made by Jean Rouch in the French Nigerian territories during several journeys undertaken for the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. These shorts were the raw material of ethnographic study and were intended primarily for purposes of research. Having seen the films separately in this form, I was astonished at the change effected by Rouch in re-assembling and re-editing his material. Taking the water of the Niger for his connecting theme, and studying the various peoples settled along the north bank of the river, Rouch has managed simultaneously to convey the diverse elements in the existence of these peoples and to illuminate the particular meaning they give to life—their sense of a sacred bond uniting them with the world.

Without being anything of an expert in negro cultures, one becomes increasingly aware of their extremely mystical character, of an emphasis on a divine omnipresence which might superficially appear to us as the product of a morbid religiosity. This mystical quality in their beliefs lends itself readily to visual interpretation, since it has its origins less in any metaphysical reasoning than in an instinctive, almost physical, awareness of the presence of a divinity in the natural world. Feeling themselves at one with the gods that inhabit the animals and plants around them, these Africans have no desire to dominate nature, to develop the techniques of mechanical progress. Rather, their existence is a constant and willing submission to the forces of nature; and it is this mystique which forms the essential theme of Rouch's film.

The natural settings and the absence of photographic refinements give *Les Fils de l'Eau* a valuable quality of immediacy. But besides utilising this unconsciously effective element, Rouch shows his technical ability in his acute appreciation of the value of close-up. This becomes particularly fitting and logical when it is employed to explain the symbols of the exchange constantly in operation between man and the universe—the sense of a mutual exchange implicit in the idea of sacrifice. These symbols are the elements and objects which link these peoples to their world: water, wind, grain, dust; and the calabash, the musical

instrument and the knife.

The film's commentary has also been developed with considerable skill. The dangers of a consciously poetic commentary, deriving from a European vision and therefore far removed from the heart of its subject, or of a "scientific" commentary which would weigh down the images without really explaining them, have been adroitly by-passed. The African languages are rich in legends, in sayings, songs and maxims. And it is enough to translate these, applying them to the particular circumstances of the film, for the words at once to convey a genuine poetic feeling and to explain the meaning of some actions that would otherwise remain obscure. The commentary is thus closely matched with the image, having its origins in the material itself and speaking as its authentic voice.

I am conscious of the danger of appearing over-enthusiastic about the religious spirit emanating from this film, particularly at a time when we tend to pride ourselves on our indifference to the supernatural. But there is something irresistibly impressive about the religious feeling that *Les Fils de l'Eau* conveys, the sense of a divinity incorporated into all living things, giving its own coherence to existence. And the film's exoticism, here used in the best sense of the term, cannot be considered merely as an agent of facile seduction. Most notably, though, *Les Fils de l'Eau* impresses by its power to suggest the life of the people of the Niger as they themselves understand it.

4

A film of a different type, *Les Maîtres Fous* provokes a number of considerations which cannot be developed here but may nevertheless be touched on. Unlike *Les Fils de l'Eau*, this is a rough document, shot in a few days in a patch of forest and during intermittent downpours. Briefly, this film describes, in terms of an isolated case, the effects of a decidedly serious setback—the failure of certain detribalised groups to adapt themselves to the way of life put forward by the West. The film's subject is only one of numerous aspects of religion in modern Africa, but the form it takes here seems to me as significant as it is curious. We seem to be witnessing the birth of what might almost be called, in contrast to classical mythology, a specifically colonial mythology.

The Maîtres Fous are members of a sect whose first manifestations appeared only about twenty years ago, and whose particular rituals are closely bound up with colonisation. They belong for the most part to the Sonrai and Germa tribes, inhabitants of French Nigerian territory who emigrate annually for some months to the Gold Coast and sign on as workers in the cocoa plantations or on building projects in the towns. The word "fou" appears in the name of the sect, and it really seems that the starting point for its adherents is a state of insanity, or more precisely of hysteria. The origin of this condition still remains obscure, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that it may be a result of the brutal shock experienced by these Africans when they are uprooted from their tribal life, with its firm disciplines and natural environment, and flung into the world of the cities. In any event, it is at Accra that the phenomenon appears in its most extreme form, and it was there that Jean Rouch approached the Maîtres Fous, members of a tribe with which he was already familiar.

As the sickness makes its ravages, the future member is taken in charge by the sect and initiated in such a way that he will subsequently have some control over his condition, being apparently able at will to remain normal when circumstances demand normality, and to give free rein to the symptoms of his sickness on call during the regular meetings of the sect. In this way the Maîtres Fous manage to reconcile the demands of the society in which they find themselves at Accra, which requires that people work for six days of the week in order to rest on the seventh, with those governing their own peculiar condition. Their meetings



"Les Fils de l'Eau": capture of a baby hippopotamus.

take place every Sunday, in a patch of bush close to the town, and once a year they proceed to the sacrifice of a dog. This act of eating a dog's flesh assumes a special significance, since the Sonrai are for the most part Moslems and the Moslem faith rigorously prohibits the eating of such meat. In deliberately committing an action so gravely opposed to the dictates of their religion, the *Maîtres Fous* would appear to be endeavouring to make incarnate the spirit of evil.

Can one see a connection between this sacrifice and the meaning of the actions that follow, amounting to a forcefully caricatured representation of certain European attitudes? Various institutions and officials—regarded by them as the European "gods"—are personified during these meetings of the sect with a fairly sharp sense of irony, or at any rate with considerable perspicacity. These "gods" are taken from the military hierarchy or from some aspect of European mechanical power, and the scene is dominated by a statuette exemplifying the splendour of a former governor of the Gold Coast—a fetish not precisely life-like, but still sufficiently accurate to leave one in no doubt of what it represents. Further to clarify this point, Jean Rouch has cut into his film some shots of the Governor himself.

When the symptoms of mounting hysteria become apparent, during a fantastic dance, we see lieutenants, captains and corporals playing out the scenes of a military comedy,

handling wooden guns and marching to a parade step. And a "train" ceaselessly traverses the area in the form of a haggard man, his knees bent and his mouth smeared with froth and blood. Watching this extraordinary spectacle as Rouch's film records it, one has the impression that a spring has snapped and whirls in the air, that the great myths we have tried to stifle are here returning to the surface in an unforeseen form—a kind of grotesque, impassioned parody of whatever ideas of "civilisation" we have tried to instil in these people. The feelings that have accumulated in them with regard to European civilisation, a mixture of envy, admiration and incomprehension, seem to have been transformed into a fierce contempt which is finding its violent expression on this Sunday afternoon, in this crazy parody.

Confronted by this extraordinary irrationality, by a situation which seems to require more than merely scientific or medical explanation, and by the meeting of the two worlds in these strange towns of Black Africa, we can perhaps more readily understand the cry of the great Negro poet Aimé Césaire, quoted by André Breton in the preface to *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal*: "... Parce que nous vous haïssons, vous et votre raison, nous nous réclamons de la démence précoce, de la folie flambante, du cannibalisme tenace. . . . Accommodez-vous de moi, je ne m'accommode pas de vous." And it is the audience seeing this film, its

peace of mind disturbed, who will have to learn to reconcile the *Maitres Fous* with the new Africa we have created.

5

Approaching modern Africa only through one of its aspects, and as it were at a tangent, *Les Maitres Fous* still provides us with an entry into this world. But this kind of ethnographical record is itself only a stage, though an important one. The need is for film-makers who will not too narrowly restrict themselves to scientific exploration, and who will be able also to break away from the Flaherty approach to the primitive, from a now-traditional attitude whose natural sweetness seems out of character with the evolution at present violently in progress.

To go further, though, is to enter into somewhat uncertain territory; and the experiences of one young French film-maker, René Vautier, show the hazards that may be encountered. Having completed his studies at I.D.H.E.C., Vautier went to French West Africa with the intention of filming a realistic documentary record. The authorities, however, did not welcome his presence, and Vautier found on several occasions that his luggage had been searched, his notebooks disappeared, and finally his negatives were confiscated. Having returned to France, he was tried, in his absence, by the "tribunal de Bobodioulasso (Haute-Volta)", and sentenced to a year's imprisonment for "endangering the external security of the state". Reasons were even found for arresting Vautier in Paris, but these must have appeared inadequate and he was soon afterwards released. In any event, administrative pressure would seem to be exercised to ensure that certain facts about colonial affairs remain obscure; and when these facts finally force themselves upon public attention, as they must eventually do, it may be too late. Alain Resnais had a not wholly dissimilar experience with his film about Negro art, *Les Statues Meurent Aussi*, which is still banned by the French censors; and the interesting work done by Claude Vermorel does not seem to have aroused enthusiasm among distributors.

Now that the time has come to deal with Africans as with

equals, to break down the barriers set up by the European superiority complex, it is apparent that the only really "African" films will be those made by Africans themselves. Some of them already have the technical equipment, and only when they can express their thoughts freely, as they already do in literature, can make their situation known to the world and propose their own solutions to the problem of relationships between Black and White, will an authentically African cinema be created. Very little has been done in this field, although Rouch, in collaborating with Damouré Zika on the preparation of the commentary for *Les Fils de l'Eau*, was one of the first to take the possibilities of a new relationship into account.

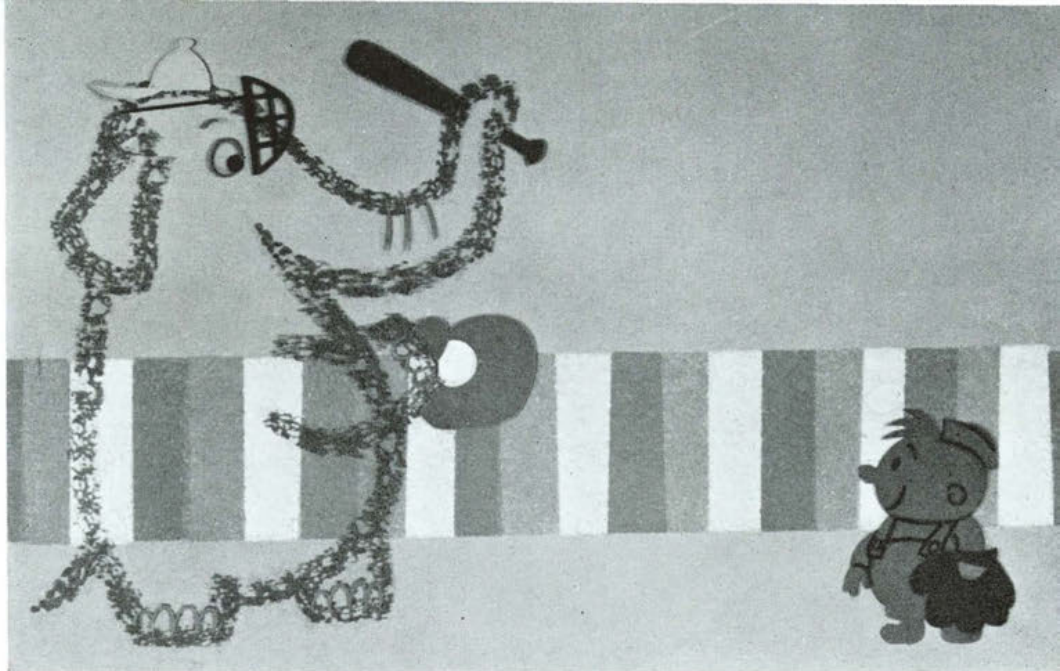
Rouch has gone still further in his new film, *Jaguar*, adopting a working method which is in itself highly original and which seems capable of leading to interesting developments. In making this film, he simply follows three young Africans who leave their homes to search for work, separate during their travels, and then come together again in a town where, to raise money before returning to their own country, they open a small shop. Rouch's approach to the subject is one which would not, I believe, be disowned by Zavattini himself. For the three Africans are themselves creating the film script through their spontaneous actions, and the director's record is made instantaneously, without the intervention of artifice, and retaining the bustling immediacy of real life. Thanks to the inventive gifts and natural imagination of its actors, the film's structure seems likely to go beyond anything that a seasoned team of writers might have contrived. And since all the episodes lived here have essentially to do with the vital business of earning a living, any gratuitous element is automatically excluded.

One hopes that Rouch's experiment may prepare the way for films in which the African no longer exists only as a subject for scientific analysis, or as part of a decorative background, but as the actively creative central figure. Before this can happen, though, there are barriers of prejudice and obscurantism to be broken down; and it is with this that we should concern ourselves.



"Les Fils de l'Eau".

U.P.A. in England



"Christopher Crumpet's Playmate".

THE U.P.A. studios have produced some of the finest animated films seen since the war; they have also been responsible for adding to the contemporary mythology two perfect symbols of the *zeitgeist*—Mr. Magoo and Gerald McBoing Boing. The news, therefore, that U.P.A. are to go into production in Britain will delight cineastes. Their aim in forming a unit here is to capitalise on their experience and reputation, and capture the English market for television commercials. What may develop from this preliminary invasion is anyone's guess: perhaps, even, a blossoming of the English animated film.

In America U.P.A. derive a considerable proportion of their revenue from television. Their New York studios are devoted exclusively to the production of commercials, and even the Burbank Studios in California, the birthplace of Magoo and McBoing Boing, produce a quota of TV material along with Columbia contract shorts. Among various television projects, which go far beyond the bread-and-butter business of producing 15-second, 30-second and 1-minute "spots", is a monthly 26-minute TV programme of full animation which U.P.A. have contracted to produce for an American network. Introduced and given continuity by an animated character, this programme will consist of a variety of non-Magoo shorts, such as *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *Willie the Kid*, many of which we have already seen. These will be linked by a series of 4-minute films, employing very simple animation and a variety of styles. Although I am told that these links vary in character, all those I saw when Stephen Bosustow (U.P.A.'s executive producer) gave a showing recently of some of his films were gay and witty interpretations of songs and music.

One of the most interesting of these 4-minute films is *The Wounded Bird*, which, from the point of view of design, seems a departure from what one has come to regard as the U.P.A. manner. Drawn in a *faux* child-primitive style, charming but slightly too teen-age in feeling, it suggests a return to the spirit of their best films. The animation is as brilliantly inventive as that of *Christopher Crumpet* and *Willie the Kid*, perhaps U.P.A.'s most interesting films technically.

On the question of design—"graphics" as it is known in America—Herbert Klynn, U.P.A.'s executive production manager, is most definite. He argues that there is no U.P.A. visual style as such; rather, a different style is evolved for each film, one that grows organically out of the story. Mr. Klynn goes so far as to speak of "a new philosophy of picture-making" at U.P.A., or, less grandiloquently, of a "six-foot-off-the-ground" approach to their work.

Like every film studio, U.P.A. has its own personal myths and heroes. Into this latter category undoubtedly falls Robert Cannon, perhaps U.P.A.'s most inventive director (*Gerald McBoing Boing*, *Willie the Kid*, *Madeline*). Cannon seems to be the sort of per-

sonality around whom legend coagulates, and there are innumerable stories about him. One concerns a remark he overheard in a Los Angeles cinema during the showing of a U.P.A. cartoon. The couple sitting in front of him were overcome with bewilderment. At last, after some minutes heated discussion, one turned triumphantly to the other and said: "I know what it is—it's a *cartoon*!"

I must freely admit that I have an axe to grind in this article, I am not merely a disinterested reporter, but am "committed" professionally, as a maker of animated films. Therefore, my view of U.P.A.'s gentle invasion of the somnolent world of the British cartoon film is prejudiced and partisan. I am convinced that the presence here of U.P.A., unlike the American invasion of the feature film, will prove the vital spur towards inventiveness that our industry needs.

In this country the animated film seems to be characterised by a deadening competence—a conspiracy of technical adequacy and technical uninventiveness. Wit, elegance and the vital sense of delight in the medium—all essential qualities of the drawn film—are too often lacking. One of the causes, in my view, lies in the excess of technicians and the shortage of genuinely creative talent. As far as I know, no cartoon studio in the country employs an "ideas man" or a "gag man"—items of equipment as necessary to all American studios as the camera. The result is that the work of production tends to be divided among various specialist departments within a studio which appear to have little contact with each other and whose normal role is purely technical (*i.e.*, non-creative). The inevitable division of labour in cartoon film-making is to some extent responsible, but there is also, I believe, another and more significant cause.

Since the war, animated films have become part of the impedi-menta of advertising. Today cinema and TV are—to use advertising jargon—merely two of the media available to an advertising agency in the planning of a campaign, and the cartoon film is one of the most popular techniques in this field. For the film-maker, anything from 30 per cent to 90 per cent of his revenue comes from the production of advertising shorts and sponsored films; and since much of the planning of such films is done by the advertising agencies concerned, it is small wonder that the results lack individuality. It is understandable, in these circumstances, that film-makers may have lost their sense of fun.

A remark made by Leo Salkin, one of U.P.A.'s directors, illustrates this point. Speaking of how he felt when, after working for fifteen years with another studio, he joined U.P.A., he said simply: "Why, if you want to do a film a certain way, you do it that way. No one stops you". Ideally, that is the way to make animated films. One wonders if our cartoon studios will learn the lesson of U.P.A.

DAVID FISHER.



Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen.

THE TENTH MUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO (4)

by ALBERT JOHNSON

The San Francisco Museum of Art recently sponsored a series of film shows with introductory lectures, in which a director's work was presented by himself or by another Hollywood personality.

GENE KELLY is speaking tonight and has attracted a capacity audience. He is briefly introduced, and there is the famous grin; the applause is deafening. The personality radiated from the platform seems warm, boyish, but very assured. "I came", Kelly begins, "because I really wanted to feel how it was to see a live audience again. . . . I read the programme notes and started to take a bit of umbrage when I read I was a 'virile penguin', but as I read on I was very flattered to be here". Kelly explains that excerpts from his films will be shown and that afterwards there will be a question-and-answer session.

I

The excerpts seem to go by too fast. Most of Kelly's big numbers are shown: the alter-ego sequence from *Cover Girl*, his waterlogged exuberances from *Singin' in the Rain*, the moody "newspaper dance" from *Summer Stock (If You Feel Like Singing)*. I am chiefly impressed, though, by the cartoon and "Olvera Street" sequences from *Anchors Aweigh*. These are based on ideas that are essentially Kelly's own—the musical visualisation of children's dreams. In the first sequence, Kelly is seen as a sailor in the "Pomeranian Navy", gambolling on a wonderful day. Suddenly he falls into an underground fairyland, a world of coloured story-book landscapes. The philosophy of this number is specific: if our hearts are big and warm and happy, if we sing and dance, then we can bear anything. When Kelly and the little mouse-king prance along a green tiled floor, the lyric screen bursts into life. And out of this synthesis of dance, technical ingenuity and fantasy, the film musical seems to have accepted one premise: today's lyric knight errant is in uniform.

In the second sequence, Kelly used the Mexican-American settlement bordering Olvera Street in Los Angeles as setting, creating out of this area a highly stylised place rich with serapes, sombreros, guitars and fountains. A never-never land based upon reality, it is an apt milieu for lyric heroes in uniform to cast their spell. Every sailor on leave sees the city's various sections with every glamorous aspect idealised, so that this view of Olvera Street carries no hint of sadness. The Mexican Hat Dance which Kelly performs with a doleful little girl (Sharon McManus) is in the tradition of the lyrically unexpected. The sailor is seen as a clown, uncontrolled and jazzy, but he quickly reverts to the mock-formality of the dance's measures. He seems to love the child's daintiness, and goes along with her curtsies with a twinkle in his eye. Still, exuberance has to break through, and soon the sailor whisks her around the fountain. It is with an indescribable thrill that the spectator notices a look of wonder and gaiety sweeping across the little girl's face, although she may have been sternly directed not to crack a smile throughout the sequence. In its last moments, the scene leaves the child sitting forlornly by the fountain, while her temporary partner, reminded of his own grievances, walks away in loneliness. For a second, one can identify in the sailor Kelly's personal screen creation of contemporary man as a bell-bottomed pierrot. . . .

II

The excerpts have all been shown, and Kelly returns to the platform.

Kelly: "I would like to say a few things about dancing, which is all I know about really, and about movies, which I suppose is the second thing I know about, and the way they're tied together. There seems to be a common misapprehension that dancing and the motion picture are well-

suited to each other . . . they are not. The dance is a three-dimensional art form, while the motion picture is two-dimensional; I would compare dancing basically to sculpture and the motion picture to painting. So the difficulties we have in transferring a dance on to film are simply those of putting a three-dimensional art form into a two-dimensional panel. In doing that, we often resort to story-line, action, dramaturgy, etc. But until we get three-dimensional pictures (and I don't mean the kind with the goggles and the eye-strain, but the real three-dimensional picture), you will never get the kinesthetic, the musical expression, the real dance form.

"The advantages of working in films are also manifold—you can cover a wide scope, you can dance out on an acre of ground. In the past, these advantages have often been turned into disadvantages: you've seen 3,000 dancing girls prancing like marines and twirling batons and so on, and although this may be eye-filling and stunning it's not very aesthetically inspiring. But this stage was important, before dancing was expected to be dancing in motion pictures; and movies found this out, they found how to use the camera, how to move it, how to do things that are very important to the dancer of today. So all those dancing girls had their importance in the development of the cinema. We all know that's pretty old hat, and we're not going to do that—even though it's in CinemaScope.

"CinemaScope does have its place—it's been a great boon to the motion picture industry, and it's very good for scenic values in many pictures I'll never appear in. . . . But I'm here to talk about dance in the cinema, and in answer to a direct question about whether the CinemaScope screen is good for dancing, I'd say that it isn't, you're not free in it. The classic proportions (of the old screen) are still the best for dancers to work with. . . ."

Gene Kelly is now ready for questions. There is a tense silence for a few moments; he leans forward and smiles, looking around, and then:

Q: Do you have a name for your style of dancing?

Kelly: No, I don't have a name for it. I'm sorry, that would be very convenient. My form of dancing . . . I wouldn't know what to call it; it's certainly hybrid and, if you'll allow the term, it's bastardised. I've borrowed from the modern dance, from the classical, and certainly from the American folk-dance—tap-dancing, jitterbugging . . . I started out as a classic dancer, but I couldn't do *Swan Lake* every night, and this again—I'm not being facetious—is something you want to do or don't want to do. But I have tried to develop a style which is indigenous to the environment and locale in which I was reared—the classical ballet was completely foreign to that, at least I felt so. It's still my opinion that to portray a truck driver or a sailor and to do it in fifth position is not as effective in most cases as in other styles. . . .

Q: Time Magazine called you "the American Nijinsky" in its review of "Brigadoon". What about that?

Kelly: I don't know what they meant by "the American Nijinsky" in this quasi-Scotch picture. . . . In *Brigadoon* we were trying to do dances that were as little dances as possible, that seemed to flow out of the action, that were so simple in mood and so much in the natural movement that they didn't seem like dancing. Some people welcome this kind of thing; others say why don't we get more excitement there. Well, we weren't looking for that; we wanted to lace the whole thing together in this piece of fantasy about a lost village in Scotland.

Q: What has happened to "Invitation to the Dance"?

Kelly: Well, *Invitation to the Dance* was finished a little over a year ago as far as the live action was concerned, but

one of the sequences—there are three, each a little over half-an-hour long—is a cartoon coupled with live action. That's very difficult to do, because they have to draw it frame by frame and rephotograph each frame next to me or around me in the position where I tell the man. And that's taken over a year. . . . The film's the best work I've ever done.

Q: Was there anything unusual you tried to introduce into "Invitation to the Dance" that you could tell us about?

Kelly: The problem was to set up three different kinds of presentation. The first is strictly a classic dance. I did a classic ballet with Youskevitch, Claire Sombert and myself, with classic characters, classic roles and classic style. I purposely did that to set the film up. The next is a very modern ballet, very American, tap-dancey, cartoony, etc.

Q: How was the cartoon sequence in "Anchors Aweigh" filmed?

Kelly: I danced first and left a space, and then I said "Draw that mouse doing that" and we had quite a time. I could never match that mouse; he had to match me.

Q: How was the rain sequence in "Singin' in the Rain" accomplished as a tap dance, as far as sound was concerned?

Kelly: You always do all taps after you shoot the film because you can't hear them because of the noise on the set. You have a play-back machine: first you make a record, and you have to visualise it all in your mind and you dance back to the record. This is one of the miserable things in shooting a film; and then after you get it all shot you watch yourself on the screen and put on a pair of earphones and dub in the taps. That's the only way we've found yet to do it—it seems old-fashioned and archaic.

Q: What are some of the censorship problems in making films?

Kelly: Well . . . there are things you have to do when you get into adult themes. I tried one in *Invitation to the Dance* which I'm personally dissatisfied with because I know I had to make concessions to censorship. But the things you can't say are the things that won't be entertaining. Our difficulty is in finding something that's aesthetically pleasing *universally*—in other words, you can be as good as you want to be, so long as everybody will want to come and see it. For instance, if it's a dance group at the University of California, if I'm going down there to do a dance, I might do some cerebral exercise that they'd be interested in seeing, or some psychological comment on the death of my mother or something. But *they* are interested in that; now I'd like to do that in pictures, it would make a good experiment, but no-one would



"Anchors Aweigh": Gene Kelly and Sharon McManus.



"Invitation to the Dance"

finance it, and that's frankly where the trouble would lie.

Q: What about your work with children in your choreography?

Kelly: They can't dance as well as adults—they haven't had as much training. When I have worked with them, I've enjoyed it more than anything else. They don't place limitations on your dancing, but on the actual numbers; it depends on what you're going for.

Q: You mentioned a difference between your 2-D dancing in the movies and your 3-D dancing. Would your stage choreography be much different from the dancing in, say, "An American in Paris", which is much like dancing on the stage?

Kelly: Actually in *An American in Paris* we weren't trying so much to do dancing as to interpret this spirit of French painters in movement. . . . What Vince (Minnelli) and I tried to do was to interpret these particular painters whose style we so gladly "stole", through dance, but with a minimum of dance and a maximum of their kinds of feeling. We showed this particular picture to Dufy in Paris, and with trembling hands we sat down and said "hello"; and he just loved it. He said he felt it was a very good attempt.

Q: Do you think modern dance should be in pictures?

Kelly: Modern dance is in pictures. The modern dance is kinesthesia, muscular force. On the two-dimensional screen

you lose that, but the modern dance has certainly influenced every dancer I know . . . I know that the greatest influence in my life personally as a dancer is Martha Graham. You may not see that, but, believe me, it's there.

Q: If you had a free choice and there was no question of censorship, do you have any stories or ideas in mind that you would use?

Kelly: I have one which I would do, and maybe in a few years it can be done. . . . I think actually that you can tell any story in any way. In the operatic form, for instance, two people stand up there and the man can put his face close to the girl's and say "I-love-you-I-love-you-I-love-you", and you accept this because it's in this particular frame of reference and this particular form. Then you have ballet, where a man is a huntsman or a gas-station attendant and he comes out in tights—you accept that. What we are trying to do in the American musical comedy—and I use the term "American" advisedly—is to sell the American musical comedy to the mass audience in the frame of reference as a musical comedy. For instance, why *On the Town* is my favourite picture is because there we made the musical comedy a pure form, or we thought we did. Now you can tell the most censorable story, which they often do—they clean them up. The main thing is presentation: a bad

woman on the screen has to do something strong and suggestive and lascivious, and as soon as you try to show that bad woman you're in trouble already. If you do it within the frame of reference already established, that's all right. But the minute you go beyond that, you'd find censorship.

Q: How many exterior shots did you use in "Invitation to the Dance"?

Kelly: None at all. All done inside on sets. I usually start with the music (when working on a dance). In *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, I had a piece of music first and just put the dance on it—that was an easy one. Usually I have to take it the hard way because of the medium in which I'm working, and that's to start with an idea and then work it out and then get the musicians in and fight with them.

Q: How important are sets to dances?

Kelly: That depends. You can sometimes do a number with just a simple background; other times they contribute immensely. The only danger is that sets can overwhelm a number and kill it as effectively as they can help it.

Q: Do you have any television plans?

Kelly: None.

There is a pause now. It is late. Suddenly tumultuous applause breaks forth for Gene Kelly. He holds up his hands and thanks us for our kindness and patience. "I enjoyed myself", he says. And we believe him.

POSTSCRIPT

THE fact that Gene Kelly's best work at M-G-M involved a collaborator led me to seek information about Stanley Donen. His *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* had gained him a large measure of prestige as a musical director, yet I discovered that there is very little written about him and could not find a satisfactory photograph in any magazine. Rather wary of the sumptuous environment of the Beverly-Hilton hotel, and the luncheon clutter that is death to worthwhile interviews, I arrange for words over coffee.

Stanley Donen arrives in a black M.G., casually attired, a bit surprised, I think, by my unprofessional manner and student errand-boy look. We drive through the sun-smog haze over Los Angeles to a place called "Zucky's", an establishment indigenous to southern California, full of colour, waxy-leaved plants and platinum-blond waitresses with pencils poised. It is all somehow quite pleasant and relaxing.

Mr. Donen smiles a secretive smile and leans lazily upon the table. "Well, where do you want to start? Do you want to talk about *It's Always Fair Weather* or go back to—well, how far back?" "From the beginning", I say, and imagine this entire setting dissolving into a flashback. He was born in 1924 in Columbia, Southern Carolina. "I studied dance in my early years", he says, "the usual stuff—tap and all that—as much as one could get there, and I worked in a small theatre called the Town Theatre, which was just *that*. Well, I finally persuaded my folks to let me go to New York in June, 1940, to see about a job on the stage. My family wanted me to get a college education, but I insisted. I got a job in *Pal Joey* (the musical in which Gene Kelly first won fame) in the chorus and as general backstage call-boy. Then I went into *Best Foot Forward* as assistant choreographer to Gene Kelly and assistant stage manager. This show was quite successful, and after that I joined George Abbott's production *Beat the Band*. When I heard that M-G-M intended doing a screen version of *Best Foot Forward* (1943), I came out to Hollywood and worked as assistant to Charles Walters, Don Loper and Jack Donohue. When Gene went over to Columbia on

loan-out for *Cover Girl* (1944) I went along as his assistant choreographer. We did all his numbers together, and I suppose you could say this was our first real collaboration on a film".

After this, Donen stayed on at Columbia, working on musicals "churned out" during the war—films like *Hey Rookie*, *Jam Session* and *Kansas City Kitty*. Then he returned to M-G-M to work with Kelly on the choreography of *Anchors Aweigh*, and when Kelly went into the navy Donen remained at M-G-M as choreographer for such pictures as *No Leave, No Love* and *Holiday in Mexico*. After Kelly's release from the navy, they worked together again on *Living in a Big Way* and then on *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*.

On the Town, Donen says, gave him his first screen credit. "We were very excited about the whole production", he tells me, recalling that they had two rehearsal halls. "Gene rehearsed the 'Miss Turnstiles' ballet in the morning and I was rehearsing something next door. We had a five-week rehearsal period, and after four weeks we were ready to start shooting . . . we could have shot the picture backwards". He cannot remember exactly why Leonard Bernstein's score for the stage production was not used in its entirety, but has an idea that the stage songs were not considered sufficiently popular. Roger Edens' new songs for the picture, in any case, "fitted marvellously". "Even in the choreography", Donen says, "we had to adapt ourselves to the film medium—but there were some wonderful things done on the stage in *On the Town*."

After *On the Town*, Donen was assigned to *Royal Wedding*, his first full directing job ("you know, the whole film, or idea for it, started after Arthur Freed saw pictures of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth"). This was followed by two comedies, *Love is Better than Ever* and *Fearless Fagan* ("they weren't really successes, but I enjoyed making them"). *Singin' in the Rain* came next, his second collaboration with Gene Kelly and the writing team of Betty Comden and Adolph Green. It took seven or eight weeks to do the *Broadway Ballet*, yet Donen thinks this number is "too far away from the really important situations of the plot . . . the surrealistic portion (Charisse and the long veil) didn't feel as if it belonged to the picture. But the film was very, very successful. . . ."

Give a Girl a Break (with Marge and Gower Champion) was, says the director, "the picture I worked hardest on in my whole life. It's another backstage musical, with nothing unusual about the conception, but in the circumstances I felt I'd done a good job. . . . But the film was such a failure—it only received one pleasant review. Usually I read just one sentence about it of dismal scorn in some magazine".



"Invitation to the Dance": the "Magic Lamp" sequence combining cartoon and live action.



"Give a Girl a Break": Robert Fosse, Gower Champion and Kurt Kasznar.

For *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* ("the most successful picture I ever did and the least complicated to get made"), Donen went on location for exteriors before learning that the film was to be made in CinemaScope. Michael Kidd had to restage the dances, sets had to be rebuilt. "I thought it was an ideal subject for CinemaScope and you could literally fill the screen with dancers", Donen says, adding that, "since the picture dealt with all the seasons my desire to film the whole thing out of doors was not financially feasible". Donen tells me that for the "Spring, Spring, Spring" number, he had hoped to use time-lapse material to show the awakening of nature, but was unable to match it up with the rest of the film. "Another original idea, as far as the score was concerned, was to use folk songs, but this didn't work out either".

Next came the Sigmund Romberg musical *Deep in My Heart* ("quite a fun job") and then *It's Always Fair Weather* ("Gene was in all the numbers, practically, so they were filmed in such a way that we could collaborate on all the dancing"). I ask Donen about the satirical element in the picture, suggesting that I had also detected an element of

wry humour in the song "Now the Time has Come for Parting". He is aghast. "There's supposed to be no intention of sarcasm; it's supposed to be serious", he says. "You've seen guys getting maudlin over glasses of beer, and in this country as well as any other, expression of this kind of emotion among men is bound to be embarrassing to a lot of people—they can't take it seriously. But it was meant to be so in this case. The picture hasn't been half as successful as *Seven Brides*—it received very good reviews, but I guess people aren't telling others about it. Perhaps the title wasn't a very good one either".

The time has actually come for parting, and as we drive away from the waxy leaves, Donen says: "I don't want to sound pompous, you know, trying to say what my ideas are about film musicals . . . It's hard really to define these ideas. You change in many respects—and then of course there are so many people who contribute to any picture. . . . In *Fair Weather*, we were working on the same principle of time as in *On the Town*. Comden and Green love to do this kind of thing—everything happening in one day—but the audience doesn't always recognise this. 'Why didn't you have more dancing', they say".

After a pause, Donen asks, "Look, do people really analyse movies? I mean, one has the impression most of the time that thousands and thousands of people just go out for an evening's entertainment, and that's that. But I happened to look at a copy of *SIGHT AND SOUND* and, you know, it's terribly highbrow. I was amazed that there was so much in pictures I'd seen that I apparently missed. . . . It's good to know that there are people who look at films as an art, but what about most of the people who go to the movies occasionally—do they really care about what I'm doing?"

Here, in a few seconds of silence, a crowd of musical images rush into my mind. The emergence of Cyd Charisse as a breathtakingly modern prototype of the dancing heroine; Kelly, Dan Dailey and Michael Kidd riotously perpetrating an American film-myth of the lyric hero in uniform; three backstage revellers, Fosse, Champion and Kasznar, crawling around a piano; and seven young backwoodsmen twirling their prospective brides in a wilderness of song. "Yes, they do", I answer; and Stanley Donen believes me, I hope.

The author gratefully acknowledges the aid of the late Frank Stauffacher and Allan Schoener of the San Francisco Museum of Art in co-ordinating sections of Mr. Kelly's talk for this article.

Salesgirl's Lament

Long are the gangways and steep is the raking
And hard on the feet is the cinema floor—
I let it console me, the fact that I'm taking
More for ice-creams, than they are at the door.

It may be the tubs or it may be the toffees,
The crisps or the kernels selected with care;
But mention my name in the manager's office
And see how it lightens his look of despair!

Chinking my change to attract the attention
I trudge up and down with my back to the screen;
Darkness denies me that extra dimension,
But switch on the lights and I'm not to be seen.

Your anger you might just as well be containing,
Whatever the perils repression entails;
It's sorry I am, but there's small use complaining
While managers take a commission on sales.

ANTHONY BRODE.



PEOPLE OF TALENT (6)

Alberto Sordi

AN actor who remains virtually unknown in this country, Alberto Sordi has appeared in many Italian films. He has in fact made far too many—an average of twelve a year. And this incessant and careless over-production threatens to disintegrate the talent of an artist as brilliant and individual as Jacques Tati, with perhaps an even more penetrating edge of satire.

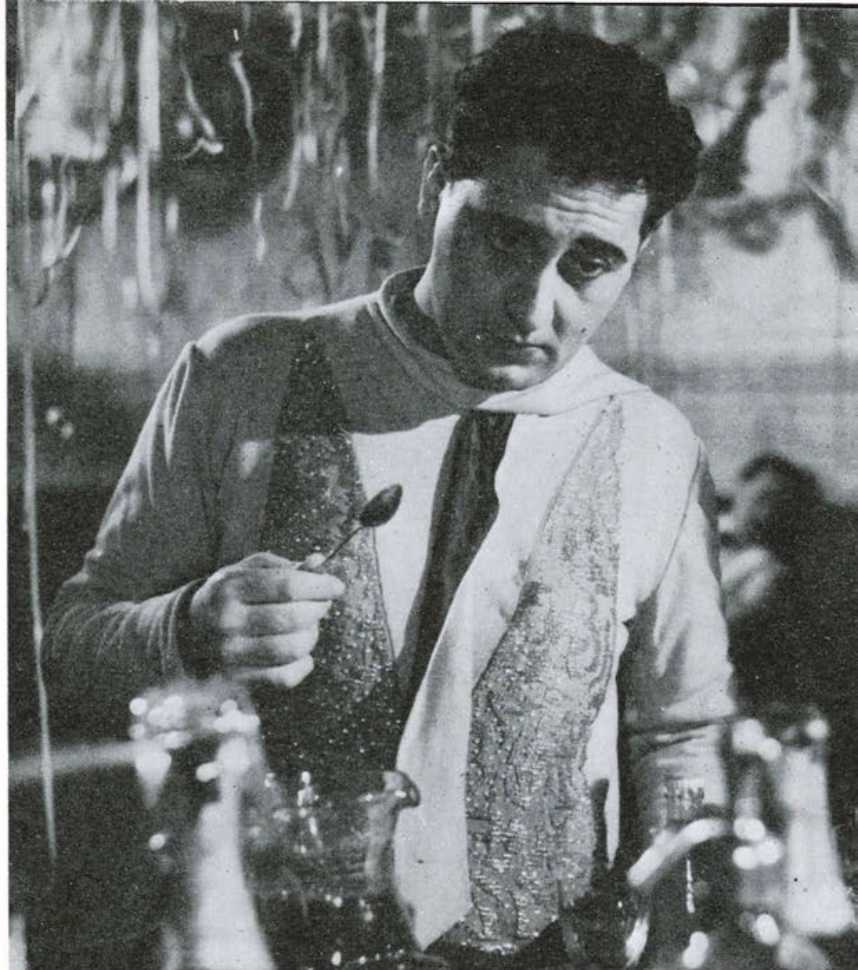
Out of this flood of pictures, though, one can choose four at least which properly display Sordi's personality: Fellini's first film, *Lo Sciecco Bianco*; the same director's *I Vitelloni*; *Il Seduttore* by Franco Rossi; and Zampa's *L'Arte di Arrangiarsi*. In each of them, there is a common element in the character played by Sordi. He is always a man (almost Man) surprised in some attitude of cowardice, dishonesty and empty, futile braggadocio. The observation of these attitudes is endlessly varied, as merciless as it is comic.

Sordi started as a music-hall actor, but first achieved fame as the dubbed voice of Oliver Hardy. His first film (a suite of music-hall sketches, on which he had the benefit of encouragement from Zavattini and de Sica) was not well directed and achieved little distinction. It was Fellini's *White Sheik* that provided his first considerable opportunity. This is the story of a simple-minded girl hopelessly infatuated with the young man playing the part of the "White Sheik" in a romantic picture-serial in a weekly magazine. His answers to her letters are wildly passionate: so much so that she takes the train to Rome and starts a search for him. In the end she finds herself on a beach near Rome—a completely hallucinatory scene of camels, odalisques and white-robed sheiks—where the serial's latest episode is being staged. And at last she finds herself face to face with her White Sheik—Alberto Sordi—whose large and noble manner does not conceal the fact that he is essentially commonplace, vulgar and loud. Disillusionment soon sets in, and the girl's romantic fantasies are finally completely shattered.

This whole film centres on Sordi's marvellous performance as the White Sheik—notably his pathetic attempts to elevate his own trivial personality to the high romantic level of the girl's dream of him. There is equal pathos in his very different portrait, in *I Vitelloni*, of a young middle-class idler, one of a bored and indolent group drifting into manhood between the bar and the only theatre of the little provincial town, dreaming always of the bright lights of the metropolis, unable to break away from the shelter of home. Sordi is the buffoon of the gang, the most irredeemably childish: wholly unaware of his problem (even of the fact that he has one), there is nothing that can cure him of his perpetual adolescence.

It was the success of *I Vitelloni* at Venice (1953) that established Sordi in his phenomenal career in the cinema. Rossi's *Il Seduttore*, far more remarkable for his performance than for its qualities as a film, presents him as a sort of idiotic Don Juan. In the end, when all his evasions have failed, he bursts into tears and runs away like a child who has been unjustly scolded. The character is again that of childish and unselfconscious innocence—but of an extraordinary insolence too. Five minutes after his collapse we find him on a sunny beach, forgetful of his troubles, singing happily to himself as he sits obediently at his wife's side and eyes the girls in their bathing costumes.

But Sordi's most fortunate encounter proved to be with Luigi Zampa. A story had been written expressly for him



by Vitaliano Brancati, the greatest (in fact the only) contemporary satirist of Italian manners: this was *L'Arte di Arrangiarsi*, and it turned out to be the writer's last bitter laugh, the last story he wrote before his death two years ago. Its theme is the art of staying on top, under whatever political system—the title might be translated as *Looking After Number One*. Sasa Scimoni (Sordi) starts out, in 1912, as a socialist—partly through sheer opportunism and partly to endear himself to the wife of a rich party member. Time passes, and he finds little difficulty in adjusting his opinions to Fascism; then, after a tranquil if shifty existence during the years of dictatorship, he easily makes a readjustment to Communism. But at this juncture he decides to enter the movie business, and the necessary capital can be obtained only from the Conservative Clerical groups. . . . Unfortunately Sasa makes a small error, and the film ends with him between two policemen.

Sasa Scimoni could easily have been one of the most repulsive heroes in cinema history: even Brancati (in the book from which the film was drawn) seems to have little affection for him. But somehow the impression he makes is entirely different; and this is Sordi's contribution. His complete lack of self-consciousness gives this master of the triple-cross a paradoxical innocence. His realisation of the character is so vital, so utterly sincere, that he believes even in his own lies. Like an acrobat, he is so absorbed in the problem of keeping his balance that he has no time to examine his conscience. It is this which gives his satire its sharp contemporary relevance; for if Fascism is politically dead in Italy, its spirit is still very much alive in the characteristic Italian appetite for rhetoric, for medals and civil glory and vain self-importance.

Sordi's art is to expose the Italian character, stripping it of its popular pretensions. And yet the popular Italian audience adores him. He is one of them, and they recognise him: a common man, in whom the rest of us can find our own image, and laugh to scorn our most distressing faults. A real hero of our time.

LORENZA MAZZETTI.

Television

AN AVANT-GARDE CALLED FRED

TELEVISION has developed too rapidly and—economically at least—too successfully. An omnivorous, multiplying public is more demanding than discriminating; and it has proved expedient rather to adapt existing forms of entertainment than to consider the subtle distinction of the new medium and devise formulas to suit it. The theatre has been sacked, with little consideration for the greater fluidity of the medium to which it is translated. The variety stage has been paraded before insensitive cameras to provide the bulk of televised entertainment. The cinema has been a convenient but not too generous source of easy programme material. Most of the men responsible for television planning have themselves come from other branches of the entertainment world—theatre, cinema, radio—with their own preconceptions of their arts. The younger sister has been so cosily clad in cast-offs that she has felt little need for new clothes of her own. Sometimes, however, one is reminded of the source stagnation of television; when, for example, programmes like *Idiot Weekly* and *A Show Called Fred* startle with their originality.



The team responsible for these two series was already known for its work on the radio "Goon Shows". The obvious co-ordinating talent is Spike Milligan, a script-writer of considerable experience and outstanding talent. A conscious intellectual, he is unkempt, bearded, with a pale, strained face that goes with his keyed-up gaiety and the undesigned impenetrability of his conversation. On the screen, his flickering, uncertain movements recall a Keystone comedy and the vague, lost, lunatic characters he plays have the quality of the jurors from *Alice*. Apart from Milligan, the principal actor is Peter Sellers, who combines a remarkable faculty for creative characterisation with staggering gifts of mimicry—mimicry which proves most lethally critical of its originals when it seems most innocently direct.

A Show Called Fred (*Idiot Weekly* was the title of an earlier series, identical in style) can fairly be compared with the *avant-garde* cinema of the 'twenties. Even without any conscious influence, without the explicit allegiance to artistic movements which characterised the 'twenties, its approach and even its images are oddly similar. The impact of *A Show Called Fred* is an intellectual and sensuous scouring. Logical conclusions and conventional reactions are denied. The only thing one is led to expect is the unexpected. The originality of the illogic and the fantasy of the images are often devastating. A man's face is seen in close-up: as he talks, two hands are playing noughts and crosses on his forehead. An elegant Edwardian lady asks for more tea: her host obliges by pouring it into her mouth from the teapot. A man knocks at the door of a suburban villa. He is wearing a diver's helmet, a football jersey, a grass skirt and plimsolls: "Good morning, constable" says the woman who opens the door to him.

The grounds for normal induction are destroyed; and with them the standards of normal behaviour. In their place is established a world of anarchic nonsense, in which the reaction to a healthy, pretty young girl is to assault her, to cast a custard pie in her face, to hunt her in safari or to clap a false beard on her and introduce her as somebody's father. People never quite achieve a conventional costume. They are marred by combinations or nightshirts or someone else's hat. They bear odd names like Fred Nurk or Basil Tweed. What gives this nonsense its peculiarly incisive quality is the complete solemnity and introversion with which it

is played. Never do the performers fall into an admission of self-consciousness.

But to be effective, comedy must have a basis in reality: it needs victims. *A Show Called Fred* finds its butts near home. Mostly it seeks them in the conventions and pretensions of the entertainment world. Sometimes it casts a little further afield to take in, for example, a stately home proprietor with a ticket punch or a puzzled antique dealer who has mislaid his assistant behind an immovable wardrobe.

The victims selected, they are subjected to one of two tests—each deceptive in its apparent innocence and geniality. The first is straightforward impersonation—mostly the work of Peter Sellers, whose mimicry withers whatever it touches. A subtle, imperceptible shading shows up any flaw or sham or absurdity; and the subject—however unfairly—is destroyed. The conversational limitations of Hans and Lotte Haas, the mannerisms of Dr. Glyn Daniel, the phoney homeliness of a well-known raconteur, even the majestic pauses and regal snappings of Sir Laurence Olivier's Richard III have fallen permanent victim to this treatment.

The alternative approach is to follow through the matter under examination to an apparently logical limit. What, for example, happens to successful contestants on panel games? They are shown being beaten up by a disgruntled panel. A familiar TV commercial shows an economical tea expert advising "One for mummy, one for daddy, one for you—but none for the pot". *Fred* therefore represents a demented little man offering "One for the carpet, one for the table, one for my pocket, one for my head . . ." The witty *monde* which surrounded Wilde is re-created with dialogue of the "Who was that lady I saw you with last night?" variety.



The first ten programmes of *Idiot Weekly* and *A Show Called Fred* have not maintained consistent form. At least two of the first series were dismal entertainment: almost every item misfired. There is still a tendency towards drawn-out sketches whose sparks are lost in masses of dialogue and over-complicated gags. But one recalls how unpromisingly the Goon Shows, which now make unerring use of every means offered by radio, began. Nothing ventured, nothing gained: these ten programmes have produced between them more vigour, originality and general intellectual stimulation than any other TV programme or series. Their images have a new style and power to shock. Their actors* all realise how serious an art is comedy, and devote themselves to it with singular application and earnestness. Sometimes there is a sense that the producer, Dick Lester, cannot quite keep up with the tempo demanded by his quicksilver authors; but on the whole he gives their material devotion and respect.

Above all, *A Show Called Fred* represents a new, wholly contemporary comedy. It has a touch of Thurber as well as earlier literary models—Carroll, Lear and Leacock. At the same time it has its affinity with the wry sardonicism of the 'twenties *avant-garde*. Although Milligan and Sellers affect to despise what they call the "my wife's backside" comedy of the music-hall, there is even some debt there. But Milligan, justly, recognises himself as the master of a new school of comic writing—native, modern, distinctive in the apparent inconsequence and geniality which conceal a barbed and steady probe. It is a genuine school: the first *Idiot Weeklies* were scripted almost entirely by Milligan's disciples, though so far only John Antrobus has developed a distinct manner of his own. A sketch he wrote about a man obsessed with the idea that there were two of him developed—between Antrobus's writing and the sincerity of Sellers' acting—into a piece of compulsive horror.

What is the future of *A Show Called Fred*? There would be a temptation to say that no team could continue to produce material of such quality and originality over a long period, were it not for the amazing record of the Goon Shows. The new series scheduled for the autumn is consequently a matter for faith.

DAVID ROBINSON.

* The regular artists include Valentine Dyall, Kenneth Connor and Grahame Stark. Guest artists have included from time to time Jacques Brunius and Irene Handl.

Book Reviews

SAMUEL GOLDWYN, THE PRODUCER AND HIS FILMS, by Richard Griffith. (The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York. Distributed by Simon and Schuster, New York).

"I MAKE PICTURES to please myself", says Sam Goldwyn, and this agreeably produced booklet, published in conjunction with a season of Goldwyn films at the New York Museum of Modern Art, largely substantiates the claim. From the time the Goldwyn Company was formed in 1916, its president (né Samuel Goldfish) imposed his personal influence on every stage of production. He made the revolutionary move of employing celebrated Broadway actors and actresses and of having sets designed by specialists instead of leaving the job, as was the custom, to the director and the studio carpenter. These experiments were not always successful: Mary Garden in *Thais* (1918) pleased the Vatican but not film-goers; the importing of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* resulted in boos from the Capitol Theatre audience and demands for its money back; the signing up in 1919 of well-known authors (Mary Roberts Rinehart, Rupert Hughes, Gouverneur Morris, Rex Beach) did not prove fruitful. But even in these early days, the Goldwyn Company had more than its fair share of successes—Will Rogers, the romantic team of Ronald Colman and Vilma Banky, Gary Cooper (Goldwyn made the mistake of relinquishing his contract to another company), Eddie Cantor. Mr. Griffith readably describes all this in a series of accounts of the films concerned. The failure of Anna Sten, on whom Goldwyn lavished a fortune in trying to make her a favourite, is ascribed, not entirely convincingly, to the contemporary audience's lack of taste. Goldwyn ordered a hair-rinse and plastic surgery for Danny Kaye before embarking on *Up in Arms. The Best Years of Our Lives*, which Mr. Griffith regards as "a towering achievement of popular art", grew out of a discussion between Mr. and Mrs. Goldwyn after seeing a picture and story in *Time* magazine. This, perhaps significantly, is the last film to be analysed here: "the Goldwyn touch" seems, since 1946, to have lost some of its cunning. The booklet has a complete list, with credits, of Goldwyn's films, 14 stills, and a bibliography which includes the engaging item: "Goldwyn, Frances, 'I Love Making Movies with Sam', *Woman's Home Companion*."

JOHN WILCOX.

JACQUES PRÉVERT, by Jean Queval. (Mercure de France, Paris, 480 frs.)

CERTAIN PAINTERS, from Archimboldo to Tchelitchev, have concerned themselves with the double or multiple image—an area of depiction wherein a collection of apples, pears and pomegranates becomes a head, or a kaleidoscope of bodies and faces becomes a waterfall; the spectator experiences a sense of confusion and the opposing images can never be truly resolved one from the other. One undergoes the same illusion (none the less "real" for being an illusion) when considering the personalities and activities of certain people. Picasso (potter, painter, man, poet, lover, draughtsman, movie star) is a prime example and his longtime friend, Jacques Prévert, is another, although in his case the triple-take illusion arises from his rôles as man, poet and cineaste.

Jean Queval in his study—illumination of his chosen subject might be a better description—has found that these aspects of Prévert are inextricable one from the other, and they become the three threads which knit together the main body of his book.

Queval prints as his "motto" a quotation from Carroll: "What is the use, said Alice, of a book without pictures or conversation?" and thereby, in thus questioning the very foundation of his book (one might almost say that he is laughing at himself) establishes a

certain fluidity of atmosphere which is echoed and supported by the book's technique. In science fiction stories we sometimes read of a human being who disintegrates when he has exceeded the limits of bearable pressure. Queval's book is a kind of considered reversal of this process; he takes a scattered collection of his own opinions, judgments quoted from other critics, extracts from Prévert's own prose, poems and scenarios, and carefully constructs from them a landscape and setting which finally reveal with a curious reality the figure who is, in fact, the prime cause of their own existence. And although, as the *Mercure de France* handout remarks, "les éléments biographiques sont réduites à l'essentiel" (the "essentiel" consists mainly of a paragraph prefacing the book) a convincing picture of Prévert emerges.

Queval remarks on Prévert's approval of René Char's dictum: "Ma démocratie n'est pas de ce monde"; and in this superb paraphrase of a Catholic pronouncement there is a key to this world of poetry and romantic, High (and essentially French) atheism in which Prévert, like André Breton and others, exists and breathes. Although the three of them might not be able to meet on entirely easy terms, Prévert, like Cocteau and Jean Ferry, is revealed as an exponent of (to adapt from Stan Kenton) Artistry in Scenario: scenarios which, in his case, revel in a specialised humour deriving from Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Black Humour. They are also imbued with an equally significant sadness and threaded by that vein of melancholy which runs through many of his poems, some of whose rhythms seem almost to echo those, say, of Lorenzo di Medici's lament for youth. Prévert's own "presence" is such that, however slight his connection with any given film, there will be moments when the only comment can be, as Queval remarks, *C'est du Prévert*.

Despite the "intentions" of the quotation from Carroll, Queval's book does lack illustrations. Acknowledgments are made to "M.M. les producteurs et distributeurs" for the use of photographs, but these do not appear, maybe through material difficulties. This is a pity because film stills and documentary photographs, such as the one from 1924 which shows Jacques and Pierre Prévert, Duhamel and Yves Tanguy all wearing striped T-shirts, would have provided a valuable running commentary on the text. This apart, the book admirably and elegantly serves its purpose and is properly rounded off with a Bibliography and Filmography which lists more than forty items. These last two documents are executed with that superb thoroughness which one only finds in certain French books or in the publications of the Museum of Modern Art.

ROY EDWARDS.

WATERFRONT, by Budd Schulberg. (Bodley Head, 15s.)

BUDD SCHULBERG has written of this novel: "... our film *On The Waterfront* left me with the irresistible conviction that there was still more to say than could possibly be included in my screenplay. . . ." In fact, all Schulberg has really done is to pad out his material, giving more depth to his background and waterfront characters than the film's ruthless pursuit of melodrama allowed. The politics behind Johnny Friendly's strong-arm union are more satisfactorily explained, and there has been some reshuffling of characters: Father Barry, the chain-smoking priest, is here the protagonist rather than the film's Terry Malloy. The book's climax is significantly different and more logical: Terry, after the slaying of his brother Charley, gives evidence against Friendly to the Crime Commission, but Friendly is found guilty only of perjury and retains his grip on the waterfront. Father Barry is reprimanded by his Bishop as being a publicity-seeking priest and transferred to another parish. And Terry Malloy? "Three weeks after, the remains of a human being were found in a barrel of lime . . . on one of the multi-junk heaps in the Jersey swamps. The coroner's report attributed death to 27 stab wounds apparently inflicted by an ice-pick. No next of kin came forward".

Schulberg's style, though undoubtedly vivid and exact in its waterfront idiom, tends towards bombast. Literally filling in with words the camera's etchings of this grey world of corruption, it diminishes the story's urgency. Individual passages—the early morning shape-up for work at the dock's edge, Father Barry's angry sermon over the body of Runty Nolan—are extremely effective. Neat, too, is the summing-up of Charley (The Gent): "Charley looked particularly scholarly with his glasses on. He read a lot. He was proud of having finished *From Here to Eternity*. He liked books he thought true to life". In passing one feels that Charley would have liked this book—if he had finished it, that is.

JOHN CUTTS.

Correspondence

Foreign Affairs

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND.

SIR,—Must so much space in SIGHT AND SOUND be devoted to foreign films? Looking quickly through the last two or three issues, what does one find?—Censorship in France, New Names in Spain and Italy; articles on the Soviet cinema, the Nazi cinema, the Japanese cinema; picture-spreads of the films of Renoir, Gance, Autant-Lara, Ophuls, Clair, Clément. And illustrating my (still) favourite movie journal, scenes from *La Strada*, *Les Grandes Manoeuvres*, *Two Acres of Land*, *A Girl in Black*, *Les Possédées*, *The Cicada*, *Rififi*, *Jud Suss*, *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, *Stella* and others. The Autumn and Winter editions even had foreign covers!

I realise that you are trying to give readers as wide a coverage of world cinema as possible, but surely this is overdoing it. It is particularly hard on those who, like myself, live in the provinces, to whom a foreign film is an event. Visconti, Mizoguchi, Kinugasa and the rest are just names to me, and, I am sure, to thousands of others. I would like to hear other readers' views on the subject.

Referring to the *Studies in Censorship*. How did China manage to ban *The Invisible Man* in 1931 when the picture wasn't made until 1933? And wasn't *Phantom of the Opera* banned in 1926 (not '29) and held up until 1930 because of the adverse publicity the film received on its arrival in this country?

Two bouquets before closing. One for *Filming a Skid Row* by Mark Suffrin, the other to the writer of *The Front Page* in the Spring issue.

329 Fleetwood Road,
Cleveleys,
Lancs.

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH SCRUTTON.

Free Cinema

SIR,—I was pleased to read Gavin Lambert's last article on Free Cinema, but must criticise his assessment of *Together* and *Momma Don't Allow*. I agree that "the total impression (of *Together*) is not quite real" but attribute this not to the director's penetrative understanding of the characters in their environment, but to her imposition of concepts upon this environment. In this film the characters and environment are used as symbols, not shown as what they are, bearing their symbolism along with them, this capable of being gently drawn out by such a persuasive artist as De Sica.

With regard to *Momma Don't Allow*, it is perhaps unfair of Gavin Lambert to devote a paragraph to criticism not of the film but of its subject, the dance; this in relation to folk-dance may perhaps be compared with the pure abstract painting of Ben Nicholson in relation to reference-full "traditional" painting. Gavin Lambert's chief error appears in this paragraph where he writes, "the self-expression here seems fairly limited", and in the previous one where he writes, "the film is not quite a personal statement". It may be suggested that the dancers are not seeking self-expression, but unselfconscious involvement in patterns of movement, and that the audience of a good film seeks this and not an expression of the director's "I" but an instance of compassionate observation.

This vital distinction between egoism and compassion Mr. Lambert does not draw, though he does state the importance of compassion—surely the most precious virtue in contemporary cinema.

Yours faithfully,
P. MORGAN.
2 Windsor Road,
Stafford.

Censorship

SIR,—Mr. Wilcox, in the second paragraph of his interesting account of film censorship, implies that the 1909 Cinematograph Act gave specific censorship powers to local authorities. This is, however, not the case. The Act was passed "to make better provision for securing safety at Cinematograph and other Exhibi-

tions" and it was only by judicial extension of s.2(1) of that Act that local authorities ever came to have pre-censorship powers at all. Indeed, the extreme fragility of this development is illustrated by the fact that although the same Act applied to Scotland the Scottish courts refused to put this interpretation upon its terms and, until 1952, Scotland had no legally backed pre-censorship system.

It was only in 1915 that it was held that a local authority could insert in the licence of a cinema a clause requiring its consent to the showing of any film. And it was not until 1924 that the necessity for prior approval by the British Board of Film Censors was held to be a valid clause, and that the method of pre-censorship substantially in force today could be said to be established.

The statement that the state delegates the authority for exercising film censorship to the local councils is also inaccurate. At no time before 1952 did the state have any pre-censorship powers. This was the answer of the Home Secretary to the industry when the latter requested a centralised censorship before 1912. The Government would welcome censorship but could not itself participate without special legislation. In fact the power of the local councils derived directly from judicial interpretation of an Act intended to fulfil quite different functions.

In the 1952 Act, however, the State did recognise the existence of a centralised pre-censorship and deliberately extended the same procedure to sub-standard and non-flam film (which had previously been exempt) and to Scotland. Only then could it be said that our system of film censorship derives from Parliament and not from the action of the local authorities themselves combined with the judiciary.

91 High Street,
Waltham Cross,
Herts.

Yours faithfully,
NEVILLE MARCH HUNNINGS.

Remakes

SIR,—I should like to protest strongly—but I don't know to whom—about the showing in our cinemas now of short films running 43-44 minutes, and bearing the titles of good films made some years ago. I gather from my B.F.I. *Monthly Film Bulletin*, that these are made initially for TV.

Now I have no TV set, as I enjoy going to the cinema and theatre, and seeing real films and plays properly produced in their correct setting. . . . As long as our local cinemas go on showing good films, I am prepared to pay my 3/2 and turn up to support them. But I do not expect to be fobbed off with secondhand stuff like this, especially when the titles lead one to expect one is going to see again a good film seen some years ago.

If these television people care to muck up what were once fine films and boil them down to three-quarters of an hour for their "Telly" audience—well, that's their funeral, and anybody who dislikes it can (a) switch off the set, and (b) write and say so. But to pinch them from the real cinema, spoil them, and then sell them back to us, I call downright dishonesty—apart from the ethics of the thing.

I have recently been had on three occasions—*Calvalcade*, *Laura* and *Christopher Bean* (all 44 minute remakes). I remembered *Laura* as a taut, well-made whodunit, and was so pleased at the chance of seeing it again, I gave up an alternative programme of two new films. I could have wept with rage and disappointment when I realised it was a different thing altogether.

Christopher Bean was redeemed for me by Thelma Ritter's appealing performance as Abbie, but how much is left of the characters of a well-planned play like this when it is dashed through in 45 minutes?

The very construction of the cinema programme makes protest difficult. If a one-act playlet lasting just over half-an-hour were presented at a theatre under the title of the real complete three-act play, one's actions would be plain—stay away and let the manager gaze at empty seats. But on the three occasions when I had to sit fuming through these "shorties" I was of course anxious also to see the main film. I could, I suppose, have walked out when I realised how I had been "had" over the others, but they were part of the programme I had paid for.

If this sort of thing continues, then I think there should be a clear indication in the advertisement, the cinema foyers and the trailers, that the film in question is a "Television version" and then we'd know. . . .

North Ferriby,
9 Park Drive,
Littleover,
Derby.

Yours faithfully,
R. L. NEWMAN.

THE sudden death of Janet Hills at the age of 36 is hard for her friends to accept or even to believe: one would not have thought that her eager vitality could be so easily quenched. Those of us who knew her through her film writings—she was the film and drama critic of the *Times Educational Supplement*, wrote frequent film articles for *The Times*, both anonymously, and contributed occasionally to SIGHT AND SOUND—regret her loss the more because the book she planned on the popular arts will not now be written. She was fascinated by modern entertainment forms and sought assiduously to understand their influences. But there was nothing of the do-gooder about Janet Hills and nothing of the deprecating intellectual; she loved the cinema and enjoyed television, pursuing both with her habitual eagerness. As a critic she loved to praise and was unduly prone to self-doubts when she had to condemn. I doubt whether in all her years as a critic she ever once gave unfair blame—certainly she never gave a careless judgment. Yet because she combined with this generous temperament a deeply thoughtful and analytical habit of mind her standards were always high. She mistrusted easy judgments and in a busy life frequently gave up precious hours in order to see a film a second time before committing herself on it. An able journalist, she never let a desire to be read betray her into substituting bright writing for criticism.

She was always good company. Her conversation, carried on at a breathless rate, was humorous, often self-critical, but teeming with ideas which however lightly expressed were always sincere. Naturally receptive—she was as good a listener as talker, sometimes giving more than due weight to other people's opinions—she had a marvellous capacity for interest in the work of others and an unsimulated admiration for their most modest achievements which warmed hearts and made effort seem more worth while. Her friends in the film world as elsewhere will miss her sadly.

stubborn individuality. Hollywood, Chandler said, had in a sense made almost too good a job of his own novels: the private detective had become the fashionable hero, his style and his subjects had been imitated too often in fiction and on the screen.

A problem for the crime novelist, Chandler once wrote, is that, "the good novel is not at all the same kind of book as the bad novel. It is about entirely different things. But the good detective story and the bad detective story are about exactly the same things, and they are about them in very much the same way". If Philip Marlowe is a more humane character than Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer (or, for that matter, than Ian Fleming's monstrous extrovert James Bond), it is not because Chandler is a gentler novelist but because he has greater literary taste and discretion. The films that came closest to putting Chandlertown on the screen, *Farewell, My Lovely* and *The Big Sleep*, may be entertainment of a fairly corrupt order, but they still take their tone from their originals. Their violence is not sickening; they find in their lurid situations material for a dispassionate, sardonic humour. The novels and films that have followed Chandler "are about the same things in very much the same way": the difference is in their standpoint. The private eye no longer looks coolly and clearly at his world; he has now become obsessively and dangerously involved in it.



THE ROARING FORTIES

- ★ 1940: Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart in Ernst Lubitsch's
★ "THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER" ★
- ★ 1941: Harpo, Groucho, Chico in Edward Buzzell's
★ "MARX BROTHERS GO WEST" ★
- ★ 1942: Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon in William Wyler's "MRS. MINIVER" ★
- ★ 1943: Judy Garland, Gene Kelly in Busby Berkeley's "FOR ME AND MY GAL" ★
- ★ 1944: Ethel Waters in Vincente Minnelli's
★ "CABIN IN THE SKY" ★
- ★ 1945: William Powell, Myrna Loy, "Asta", in Richard Thorpe's
★ "THE THIN MAN GOES HOME" ★
- ★ 1946: Robert Montgomery, John Wayne in John Ford's "THEY WERE EXPENDABLE" ★
- ★ 1947: Clark Gable, Deborah Kerr in Jack Conway's "THE HUCKSTERS" ★
- ★ 1948: Judy Garland, Fred Astaire in Charles Walters' "EASTER PARADE" ★
- ★ 1949: Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Judy Holliday in George Cukor's
★ "ADAM'S RIB" ★

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THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

The new National Film Theatre will open on the South Bank in June, 1957. Although the actual building will be provided by the London County Council, a sum of about £17,500 is needed to pay for its equipment and furnishing, and the National Film Theatre Appeal has been launched to raise this money. The British Film Institute would like to thank those who have generously responded to the appeal and to invite those who have not yet done so to help towards reaching this target as soon as possible. At the time of going to press, contributions received amounted to just over £2,300.

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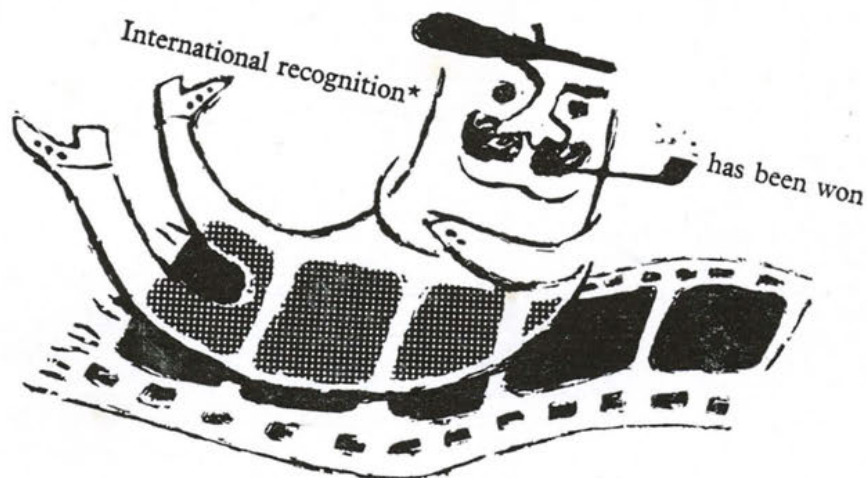
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METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Lust for Life*, *Merrily We Live*, *Anchors Aweigh*, *Invitation to the Dance*, *Give a Girl a Break*, portrait of Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen.
WARNER BROTHERS for *The Searchers*, *East of Eden*, *The Big Sleep*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Seven Year Itch*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Trapeze*.
RKO-RADIO PICTURES for *Farewell, My Lovely*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Trouble with Harry*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Christopher Crumpet's Playmate*, *The Last Act*.
J. ARTHUR RANK DISTRIBUTORS for *It Came from Outer Space*.
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TITANUS for *Il Tetto*.
HUNGARIAN STATE FILM for *Little Carousel*.
GLORIA FILM for *08/15 in der Heimat*.
FILMAUFBAU for *Nicht Mehr Fliehen*.
REAL FILM-EUROPA FILM for *Der Teufels General*.
FILMSONOR for *Le Mystère Picasso*.
LES FILMS GIBE for *Marie Antoinette*.
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CORRESPONDENTS

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ITALY: Robert Hawkins
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